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GREAT DAYS

A NOVEL

BY

FRANK HARRIS

ST. PETER

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

A BOY'S memories: hazy in childhood; but clearing later: a sturdy boy with quick Celtic face.

Jack's earliest memory was wandering along a corridor at night with his sister, going downstairs to the pantry to get bread and jam. His sister squeaked at some sound and ran back: he went on and got the food. As he turned to the door a shadow fell on the pantry window: it numbed him with dread; his heart beat so loudly he was sure it must be heard: in a little while curiosity overcame fear and he peered out into the Inn-yard.

It was very dark; but he saw men passing to the stable with casks on their shoulders—eight or ten, one after the other, silent shadow-shapes: he was half-relieved, half amazed, his heart still a-flutter. As soon as he began to follow his sister up the dark stairs he was suddenly seized by fear

of what was behind him and fled, too, breathless, dreading he knew not what. . . .

Later: Jack was taken out on Sunday by his father: he was a little afraid of his father and uncomfortable in new clothes, his face sticky with soap. His father chided him: "Don't make faces, boy."

The servant had washed his face, for his mother was not well: she hadn't washed the soap off, the water was not warm, the soap had got into his eyes, and left his skin all crinkly-stiff. Again his father snapped: "Don't make faces."

They were in a chapel; the pews low and yellow, the walls bare and white. The minister preached about hell, described the flames. Jack was uncomfortable, afraid; he didn't want to burn forever all over. He remembered burning his finger once and it smarted dreadfully: he disliked the chapel; the people in it seemed common, ugly.

His father put on a little black cap he sometimes wore in the house: the boy felt inclined to laugh at it. Then he saw other people looking at it and he grew hot and ashamed: no one else wore a little black cap: he hated it. He watched a fly crawl over it: his father whispered "Don't stare!"

The minister prayed with his eyes shut. The people joined in, his father loudly:

"Lord save us, Lord save us."

Jack was uncomfortable, the skin of his face felt glazed: he wished he were out in the woods. . . .

Long afterwards: he was awakened by unusual noises: doors opening and shutting: someone clumped past his door in heavy boots. He dressed hurriedly: he could dress himself now. He went to the door, opened it and listened. Suddenly Gibby, his cousin, passed all dripping in yellow oil skins; he asked Gibby: "What's the matter?" Gibby replied hurriedly: "Ship ashore on beach —your father sent me to tell Missis to light fires and warm beds for the shipwrecked people."

Jack begged Gibby to take him to the beach: he wanted to see the wreck.

Gibby said: "Night's too dirty": Jack begged.

At length Gibby replied: "You can follow me if you like."

Jack followed Gibby outside—the gale nearly pushed him down: Gibby led him by the hand.

They came to the beach; knots of men all about and two great flares of yellow light from two piles of tarred wood set on the strand.

Suddenly Jack saw his father, who was direct-

ing the sailors where to build the bonfires. Riding, Chips, and Widdison were busy setting fire to the piles of wood which the others had made.

Jack left Gibby and tried to get to his father; he was blown down twice on the slippery shingle: he persevered, and at length got hold of his father's coat.

Thus sheltered Jack caught a glimpse of the wreck etched out in black lines against a pale rift of sky: the foremast was snapped off half way up and hanging down with the sail: the mainmast tall and bare: the mizzen with small squarish sail on it: a vague outline of people grouped about the mast on the sloping deck.

On the beach near by amid the thickest crowd Jack recognized Dr. Crosby, the master of his school, talking to a stout man in uniform: they all seemed very excited, but the gale prevented him hearing what they said. In a lull the knot of men came nearer: the rector, Mr. Carrol, whom he hardly recognized he was so muffled up, cried to the man in uniform:

"But something must be done, Lieutenant: what's to be done? It's awful——"

The Lieutenant shouted back: "Nothing can be done, nothing; no boat could live a second in such breakers."

Dr. Crosby bellowed to Jack's father: "What do you say, Morgan: can't you do anything?"

His father answered nothing: suddenly Newton, whom Jack knew, a youth, came panting up. His father bade him strip, put a belt about his waist, tied a thin twine to the belt: then took him to the water's edge and pointed out how he must go higher up the beach—two hundred yards higher, and wade in and swim out as rapidly as possible.

"The tide is setting across," his father shouted in Newton's ear: "it'll carry you aboard. Don't be afraid; and don't stop trying! There's no danger for you, remember; I shall feel you all the time by the string: you'll be safe: do your best and *don't turn back:* now, my lad, show what stuff's in you."

Newton disappeared into the night and they waited. A little later the wreck was lit up with a great flare; they had kindled a fire in the bow to show Newton the way. Then something happened; Newton was being washed shorewards; everyone hurried down the beach.

His father called the men to make a chain. They took hands and waded into the sea as far as possible: Dr. Crosby next to his father, who was right up to his neck. A wave swept over

them: his father was covered and Dr. Crosby: then the heads of the men appeared again—blots on the foam.

The boy was afraid; left alone on the beach he became conscious of the cold; the howling force of the wind, the roar of the incoming waves and the hissing and sizzling of them as they drew back down the pebbly strand.

Suddenly Jack stared: the ship was quite close: he could see a crowd about the mainmast, men hurrying to and fro; others standing on the bulwarks forward with ropes in their hands. Then clearly a white figure was being dragged over the bulwarks right against the flame: shouts and cheers rose from the crowd on the beach. His father came out of the sea shaking the water from him: the next moment he had tied a line, which Riding brought him, to the little string in his hand, tied it very carefully, and the line was drawn into the water and disappeared towards the ship.

Suddenly a faint cheering was heard from the wreck; it brought forth a great shout from those on shore. The crowd thronged about his father congratulating him, shaking his hands: they called him "Captain" and cheered him, again and again. Dr. Crosby came over and cried to him in his big voice, slapping him on the shoulder:

"Well done, Captain; well done."

Jack glowed with pleasure. The Lieutenant in his uniform shook hands with his father: he said:

"Well done, skipper! You were right after all."

Jack did not like the word "Skipper": he did not know why. He was all hot with pride of his father: he slipped his hand into his father's wet hand. His father turned to Gibby with sharp command:

"As soon as Newton comes ashore, give him hot grog in the kitchen and see that there is hot water ready and hot blankets."

Gibby answered: "Ay, ay, Sir!" . . .

Jack could not remember how he got home, or even how many were saved; but he could always see the black wreck and the cowering people and the sheets of spray, and always in spite of the howling wind and the roar and lash of the waves he could hear that faint cheer. . . .

A little later; vague alarm in the Inn: Gibby hurried in at nightfall and talked to his father about the Preventive men: the Lieutenant was coming to search. His father sent Gibby to the fishing smacks for men—Riding and Chips, Widdison and Newton—all of them: they hurried up,

a dozen or more: Jack on the watch saw them take kegs from stable and barn and carry them on their shoulders down to the harbour the back way. He wondered whether they were the men he saw through the pantry window years before bringing in the kegs. For hours they worked hastily, silently. Then his father told Gibby to sling a couple of kegs on the brown mare and take them to Lieutenant Myring's house and leave them there. Gibby seemed surprised.

"You fool," cried his father, "if he refuses and sends them back, we are no worse off: if he accepts them, there'll be no more searching."

"But he can find nothing," said Gibby.

"Do as you are told, booby!" his father growled.

Hours later Jack, hearing men talking, crept downstairs and saw in the kitchen the big Lieutenant with three or four of his men. The officer seemed half apologetic.

"We had to search, you know, Morgan. One of my men got information. Glad to find there's no foundation for the report."

But he looked angry, Jack thought, not glad: his father, he noticed with wonder, was much smaller than the Lieutenant; he was smiling and offered drinks which Nancy, the barmaid, brought:

the Lieutenant waved them off: then bowed to Nancy and said something, smiling: his father persisted in offering drinks, the Lieutenant paid no attention to him. Jack hated the Lieutenant: couldn't understand why his father was so nice to him.

The last picture was at the door; the Lieutenant, with the reins in his hand, talking to Nancy. He suddenly put his left arm round her waist and stooped to kiss her; but Nancy ducked quickly and avoided him. She tossed her hair back and said something saucily; the Lieutenant laughed and, swinging himself on his horse, called out of the dark:

"Good night, Nancy: you'll soon see me again: good night!"

"Good night, Sir!" in reply, and the clatter of horses' hoofs on the street. . . .

His mother, all shaken and frightened, was weeping silently. His father went over to her, saying: "Go up to bed, Mary, go to bed, dear."

"Oh, Tom, the dreadful life"—was all she answered. As she turned to the stairs, she told the boy and his sister to come with her: still weeping she put them to bed.

Jack lay awake for a long time in the darkness; again and again he saw the Lieutenant standing

over Nancy at the door, and Nancy looking up in his face with saucy eyes—smiling.

* * * * * *

A Sunday morning later; church bells ringing; Jack had the usual discomfort of good clothes, collar and stiff boots. They all went to church and sat in a big, high, square, brown pew. The windows were pretty: the boy studied the faces and figures of Saints in the painted glass. He thought the music lovely. He liked church better than chapel. Why did his father ever go to that mean chapel with the common, ugly people? Church was jolly, he decided. The words and rhythm of a great psalm stuck in his memory like the music and the glow of the pictured faces—

"Now lettest Thou Thy Servant depart in peace according to Thy word——"

He was charmed and softened, though he couldn't say why.

When they got up to sing, his sister stood on the hassock and craned up to see Lady Barron: he pulled her down. When the rector, Mr. Carrol, began to preach, the boy laughed; the thought struck him that perhaps his chum, Fred Carrol, would one day be stuck up there under the dark canopy to preach and pray. His father glared at him: his mother put her hand on his. . . .

The church was warm; Jack grew restless; with his toe he found a little hole in the floor under the bench and he rooted at it to make it bigger, wondering whether he'd be able to work a hole through. The wood was old and crumbly, and he soon got his toe under the board: then he prised and prised till something gave: he went on rooting and prising till suddenly a long splint broke off with a loud crack. He looked up guiltily and caught his father's angry frown: he stopped, a little frightened.

Later he discovered a new game. He noticed that if he leant for some time against the back of the high pew something stuck, probably some remnant of varnish. He leant back for some time intent, then bent forward suddenly with glorious result—the squeak of the cloth being pulled away from the sticky place. Again his mother's hand was laid upon his: his father glared at him and cleared his throat loudly.

When they came out of the church they met Sir George Barron and his party. Sir George, a florid, portly man, elaborately dressed, carrying a cane: he came over to them loftily important; his father took off his hat and bowed low. Sir George waved his cane and said patronizingly:

"So our friend the Lieutenant found nothing, eh, Morgan?"

"Nothing to find, Sir George," replied his father, smiling obsequiously, at which Sir George laughed loudly:

"Well, well; I'm glad to hear it—for your sake." Turning towards his carriage he added:

"By the way, send me up a dozen kegs of your best, Morgan: will you? I'm having some friends down from town, Lord Petre, and—and some others——"

His father bowed and promised.

Jack hated it all. What did it mean? Since the night on the beach his father had been a hero to him. Why did people treat him so? How did they dare? He remembered that the Lieutenant called him—"Skipper." Why did Sir George Barron speak like a superior?

As they walked home he did not listen to the talk. He was wondering why all the boys made up to young Barron at school; why the masters never gave him a punishment? Why young Crosby was always about with him? He disliked Crosby, who was the head of the class and could read Latin. He wondered why sums were so much easier to do than Latin. What did Latin mean? What was the good of Latin anyway?

Did people ever say "mensa" for table? What fools they were! School would be jolly if there were no lessons: games were fun—lessons beastly. . . .

At length came what he later called the Awakening.

One of his delights still was going downstairs at night to get food: Jack was always ready to eat. One night everything was quiet in the house: his mother was ill. He stayed in her room for hours: he loved his mother; she was always gentle, kind. Could she be angry, he often wondered, like his father? She never was even cross.

His father came in, talked a little, kissed his wife and went away: Emily, Jack's sister, came in and talked for a while: she wanted to know whether she should sit up with mother. The mother said "No," she had better go to bed; she'd send for Nancy to sit up if she wanted anyone, but she'd be all right by herself. Emily kissed her "good-night" and went to bed. Jack reflected vaguely that his sister slept alone now and he had the bedroom to himself. A little later his mother saw him yawning, so kissed him and sent him to bed: "It's getting late," she said, "I'll try to sleep."

As he crossed the corridor to go by the back staircase he heard a vague noise. He listened but everything was quiet. He went into his little room and put off his slippers, and then out of curiosity returned again to the stairs and crept down a flight: he heard scuffling; there was someone in the kitchen. Was it Nancy, the barmaid? Who was it?

Jack crept down another flight, avoiding the stairs which creaked: then bent down and peeped into the great kitchen.

There was a dull fire of logs on the hearth, just enough to see by and there!—two figures struggling—his father and Nancy the barmaid. In a moment the boy saw that his father had his arm round Nancy's waist and was dragging her across the room: the girl resisting. . . .

As they passed in front of the fire his father put his arm round her neck and drew her head back and kissed her on the mouth. The girl seemed to yield for a moment (Jack was gasping with excitement), then, bracing both hands against the man's chest, she pushed him away. . . .

His father drew her to him again and kissed her: she did not seem to resent the kisses: but as soon as he tried to drag her across the room she resisted: why?

Suddenly his father renewed the struggle; there was something fierce in his embrace which excited Jack's anger; he realized all at once that his father was trying to pull her to the big settle at the side. As they came close to it the girl wriggled down out of his father's arms and almost got free; but his father stooped quickly, picked her up and laid her down on the settle. The boy caught a glimpse of white petticoat and the gleam of white, round limbs. It made him angry with his father; he did not know why.

His father pushed the girl back; she struggled up; he pushed her back again. Suddenly there was an exclamation. His father moved away. The boy saw red on his hand: Nancy had bitten him. The girl got up and whispered sulkily:

"It's your own fault. . . . I told you I wouldn't—with her up there, sick."

His father looked at her and sucked his wounded hand.

"Let me do it up," she said.

His father pushed her away: "You peevish bitch," he said, angrily, in a low voice.

"I don't care," she replied defiantly, putting up her white arms to tidy her hair.

For the first time the boy saw that her arms were white and round and pretty; with a shock of

intense surprise he realized that Nancy was very pretty.

In a whirl of sensations and emotion; hate of his father and wild excitement, Jack stood breathless with dry mouth and burning face. His father turned towards the stairs. The boy stole away to his room. His bed was cold: he was shivering.

Again and again he recalled the scene; tried to see more—Why was he so excited? Why did Nancy——? Without words he realized thrilling what it all meant. . . .

His childhood was passed and gone.

CHAPTER II

NEXT morning, still vibrating from the shock of the new emotions, Jack went to say "good morning" to his mother; to his surprise he saw her as he had never seen her before; her pallor struck him and her weakness; her eyes he noticed were large and dark, her hands like wax. Full of a new pity, he asked her how she was, and tried to do little things for her: when he was going she called him to her and kissed him: "My boy's getting to be a man," she said.

Downstairs things were as usual: his father spoke to him in the old quick way: looked as he had always looked out of sharp gray eyes: if his left hand had not been bound up, Jack might have thought he had dreamed the scene of the previous evening. He studied Nancy curiously: "Yes, she is pretty," he decided; her eyes deep blue; her skin white, her hair, too, jolly with strands of gold in the chestnut waves.

Nancy must have felt the new scrutiny, for she exclaimed, pertly: "Well, you'll know me again, I hope." Jack turned away a little confused; he

did know her now, he felt, as he had not known her before: he saw her differently—and in detail so to speak.

His eyes had been unsealed for certain persons and for certain things as well.

A day or two afterwards he was out walking with his chum Carrol, the son of the rector: they had climbed the village street to the downs behind, and suddenly the whole scene and its beauty became visible to Jack; he saw how the two great arms of land bosomed the bay; how the little harbour below, with its fishing smacks and boats, was sheltered by the pier, and how the beach away to the right was dappled by patches of black shingle on the yellow sand; but the marvel to him was the revelation of loveliness in the whole scene: it was a picture, he said to himself, awestricken. Even the great Head opposite was superb, the green slopes of it flecked here and there, with dark woods up to the bare bluff front, where you could lie on your face and look down on the watery plain six hundred feet below—it was all beautiful, a picture!

From this time on he began to realize everything more clearly: he noticed now that Carrol was slight and rather pale: he wondered curiously what he himself looked like.

"How do I look, Fred?" he asked a little shyly.

"All right," replied Carrol, carelessly.

Jack felt ashamed to press him; but as soon as he got to his room again, he looked at himself in the glass and was disappointed: he didn't like his face at all: the nose was too prominent, the ears too large, the eyes commonplace blue. His taste, formed unconsciously by the regular features and fine colouring of Nancy, found fault with his ruder, more energetic modelling: he didn't notice the quick changes of expression, the vivacity and bold resolve which redeemed the irregularity of his features: he was ugly, he said to himself with a sinking almost of despair.

Bit by bit life became conscious to him: its pains and pleasures more noticeable, or, at any rate, more memorable. He disliked being reproved by Dr. Crosby for not knowing his Latin grammar: he began to try to learn it and soon succeeded and came to the head of the class with young Crosby.

The delights of living were innumerable: the long afternoons of football and its even battles; ball too and tig and the school rivalries of running and jumping; to say nothing of the holiday walks with Carrol and great swims.

He could never forget one wild March day

when Carrol took him out on the Head to get a raven's nest. Thanks to his occasional fishing trips in one of his father's smacks he was easily the best climber in the school. He was delighted to be asked to climb the tree, but when he found that it sprang from the edge of the cliff and hung right over the water, and was swaying about in the high wind, he didn't like the job.

A remark of Carrol's decided him to attempt it.

"I had no idea it was blowing so," Carrol cried. "Up here it almost knocks you down. You could get the nest if it were calm, couldn't you?"

"The top of the tree's jolly thin," Jack replied, "it doesn't look as if it would bear."

"Confound it," cried the younger boy, "that brute Crosby will crow so and I hate him; he said no one could climb that tree, and I've watched the nest for weeks and I'm sure there are eggs in it."

The mention of Crosby's rivalry decided Jack at once; in ten minutes he had climbed the tree and returned with one egg in his mouth and another in his pocket.

"Aren't they beauties?" cried Carrol, holding the grey-green treasures blotched with black, in his hand. "May I have one?" he added wistfully.

"Both," exclaimed his companion magnanimously, "you found 'em. I only got 'em because you wanted them and Crosby said I couldn't. What a brute he is," he added, "I'm sure we'll have a fight yet."

"Father says we'll be fighting with the French soon," said Carrol.

"The French can't fight," Jack declared with authority, "Gibby says Englishmen are stronger because they eat beef and not frogs and snails. Fancy eating a slimy snail. Ugh! Some day I'll be captain and have my own ship. You must come as lieutenant."

"My father won't let me," replied the other lugubriously. "I'll have to stick at home; father wants me to study to be a parson, though I'd hate to spout and pray and look solemn."

In such talk the two youngsters made their way down the hill, meaning to take the long road home. A mile or so inland they came to the wood which bordered Sir George Barron's place, The Court, and here they began chasing blackbirds and thrushes and pelting them with stones.

The sport was cruel, but that had never struck the youngsters; it gave them half an hour or so of huge excitement, and incidentally limbs of steel and lungs of leather. This afternoon they ar-

rived at the end of the park with a blackbird apiece and were quite content when suddenly they were hailed by a couple of boys who greeted them with the superiority of seniors. One was young Cecil Barron; the other Will Crosby, the son of the master of the Grammar School.

Cecil Barron was slight and good-looking with delicate, fair complexion; bold, hawklike nose and violet blue eyes. Crosby, though six months younger than his companion—only just fifteen, in fact—was much bigger than any of the others; a loose-made shambling fellow, with big hands and feet and head. Strange to say, though rather a bully, he was a favourite in the school; but between him and Jack Morgan there had always been a certain tension and rivalry, for, if Crosby was the better scholar, Jack was his superior in most games, perhaps because being smaller he had come nearer his full growth and was therefore better knit and quicker.

"What have you got there?" cried Crosby roughly when the couple came within hearing.

"A couple of blackbirds," replied Jack. "Wouldn't you like them?" he added derisively.

"You had better not let one of our keepers catch you with them," warned Barron enviously,

"my mother thinks it cruel to hunt birds and she has given orders to the keepers to stop it."

As Jack admired young Barron, the reproof hurt him and reduced him to silence.

Carrol, however, created a diversion by crying out:

"Jack climbed the tree, Cecil, and got the raven's eggs," he added, showing them in his hand.

"They're not raven's eggs after all," said Crosby maliciously; "but crow's."

"You only say that," retorted Carrol, "because you're jealous. You said no one could climb the tree and Jack climbed it, though it's blowing like anything and it bent over, till I thought it was going to break off."

"They're not raven's eggs, I tell you," repeated Crosby, taking one in his hand.

"Oh yes, they are," replied Jack Morgan, "and you know it."

"You're a liar," replied Crosby insolently, and in his excitement he pinched the egg till it broke.

"You brute!" cried Jack, thinking he had broken the egg on purpose. "We'll soon see who's the liar," he added, beginning to take off his coat.

"No, no," cried Barron, coming between the

two, "don't you fellows fight; it's only cads who fight with fists; gentlemen fight with swords."

"Let him apologise then," cried Jack, still hot with indignation.

"Come Will!" said Barron, appealing to his companion, "it's no good rowing for nothing."

"I only said he was a liar," replied Crosby sulkily, "because he said I knew they were raven's eggs and I don't know them; how could he tell whether I knew them or not?"

"There you are," said Barron, turning to Morgan; "that's all you can want."

"No it isn't, he broke the egg and called me a liar," replied Morgan; "he must beg pardon or fight."

"I'll fight fast enough," retorted Crosby, pulling off his coat. "I'll give you socks, potboy."

"Are you all deaf?" cried a loud voice impatiently, and as they turned at the sound they found themselves face to face with a gentleman mounted on a big brown horse. "What's the matter?" he asked imperiously.

The boys looked at each other. Barron was the first to recover himself.

"They've been disputing," he said, "and the lie was given. But no gentleman fights with fists."

"Who are they?" asked the horseman.

"That's the son of Dr. Crosby," pointed Barron, "master of the Grammar School, and this is Jack Morgan."

"The Morgan who keeps the ordinary in the village?" asked the stranger.

"Yes," replied Barron.

"Well, you had better not fight," said the horseman, "but show me the road. Does this path," he went on, pointing to the bridle-path which crossed the wood, "lead to the village?"

"Yes," replied Jack, "it joins the main road at the edge of the wood."

"Whom have we had the pleasure of speaking to?" asked young Barron with a sort of negligent grace.

The rider looked down at the lad with an amused smile: "And who are you, may I ask?"

"Cecil Barron," replied the youth a little proudly.

"My name's Nugent—Captain Nugent, at your service," said the horseman, smiling.

"And now I'll bid you good day," he added; "but don't fight, you two; there'll be fighting enough for everyone soon if all I hear is true," and with that he put his horse to a canter and soon disappeared among the trees. By tacit con-

sent the boys broke again into couples and went their way; the two elder into the woods, the two younger after the Captain towards the village.

Jack Morgan had fallen silent; he had been touched by two things: the courtesy of Barron and the instant response it called forth from the Captain which moved him to a vague envy. The other was Crosby's epithet "potboy" and something contemptuous in the tone of the Captain when he spoke of his father and the "ordinary" in the village. He felt keenly that for some reason or other he was looked upon as of lower class than his companions, and for the first time he realised his connection with the public-house with a sense of shame.

"What are you thinking about, Jack?" said Carrol after a while in silence. "Crosby isn't worth it."

"I wasn't thinking of him," Jack replied; "I was wondering if 'twas cruel to chase birds?"

"Rot," cried Carrol, "Barron only said that to annoy you; he thinks you too cheeky."

"I'd rather be cheeky than conceited," replied Jack, but Barron's dislike annoyed him and he added: "He can keep his old birds for me."

In a short time the two boys came to the village and separated in the High Street, the one going

to the rectory, which lay up to the left under the lee of the church a couple of hundred yards away; the other to the village Inn, which formed a sort of centre to the village. The Inn was opposite the green and separated from it only by a great chestnut tree. Both the tree and the Inn had a certain notoriety. The tree was over a hundred years old, it was said, and was still a fine specimen of its kind; round its base was a circular oak settle much frequented on fine summer evenings by the village worthies.

The Inn itself, the Robin Hood, dated from 1609 and showed not only in name but in its furnishing a good deal of that romantic attachment to the past which is part of our English heritage. It was a large two-story building with diamonded broad windows on either side the broad low door. On the right side of the passage was the ordinary; the dining-room, as it was called later, with a long, narrow refectory table in it and wheel backed chairs. On the other side was the parlor; behind the parlor the bar; and behind the ordinary the kitchen. As Jack made his way along the passage he heard his father's voice. He passed the bar into the great kitchen which looked out on the back.

There were four or five people in the kitchen:

his father and mother; Gibby and the cook. There was besides a tramp, a weedy looking little man of perhaps forty with sparse grey hair, watery red-rimmed eyes and reddish nose.

"Now my man," said his father as Jack entered, "if you don't get out of this you'll be up before the Justices. You'd have penal servitude if I had my way."

The tramp, awed by the contempt of the host's words and manner, slunk out of the door into the passage and disappeared.

Turning to his wife Morgan went on:

"Missis, Missis, you musn't encourage these rascals; why give good meat and bread and beer to such a lazy worthless sot."

"Ah Tom," exclaimed his wife, turning towards him, "you must lave me alone in me kitchen; we shant miss the bits of food." One couldn't help noticing the soft Irish brogue in her speech.

"But he doesn't deserve it," said the father with a sharp voice; "he's never done an honest day's work in his life, I'll warrant."

"Well, and what of that?" said his wife, turning again to the work: . . . "he was some poor mother's son, wasn't he? and hungry."

In his new found consciousness Jack began to wonder vaguely why he liked his mother's reply;

the pitying kindness of it warmed his heart, and yet he could not make out why it should, for his father was probably right; the tramp was merely a lazy, worthless loafer. Still his mother's loving kindness and generosity appealed to him intensely.

Suddenly out of the dim past his memory called up another phrase of hers which he had forgotten; and indeed at the time had not even noticed. Some women were in the kitchen talking of a young baby; Jack was not interested in the subject; one declared the child was too weak to live, another chimed in "a good thing too; it's main ugly." His mother turned on her reprovingly:

"No baby's ugly that has all its features."

Why the word had stuck in his memory Jack could not imagine; even now he saw nothing of the trembling, deep mother-instinct which inspired it; but he felt vaguely that she was always kind to everyone.

Why did he like what his mother said so much? Jack worried his brains in vain. All she said and did touched him, made him love her though he thought her "soft" as Gibby often said she was. While dwelling on his love for her he suddenly felt disloyalty to his father in his over-great affection for her; but his father, too, was splendid he said to himself, recalling the shipwreck. . . .

CHAPTER III

JACK soon discovered that Captain Nugent was right; all the talk in the Inn and on the quay was of the French and their wild revolution which had been brought about, some said, by the bad winters and terrible poverty. Jack had heard echoes of the French doings for some time past; but most of the news went in at one ear and out at the other. The fall of the Bastille, however, shook the world, and within a week the report of that astonishing thunder-clap reached Hurstpoint, for the village was only a few miles from Dover, and Dover was within a day's sail of the French coast at Calais.

English feeling at first was strongly in favour of the popular revolt; men hoped it would end in the establishment of what they called "free institutions"; pictures were sold of "the Goddess Liberty seated on the ruins of the hated Bastille restoring the crown to a repentant monarch." English caricaturists even went so far as to portray Marie Antoinette as "a drunken Messalina."

But all this changed quickly; when Parliament met in January, 1790, it was to hear men grow eloquent in praise of the British constitution and in condemnation of "the anarchy and licentiousness" which they declared reigned in France. The truth was, as soon as the English governing classes got wind of what they were pleased to call the "insane doctrine of equality" promulgated by the Paris mob and the fish-wives, they veered round and began to heap extravagant abuse on what they had been extravagantly praising for months past. It was natural enough for the nobility to side with the French aristocracy in defence of class privileges and this aristocratic feeling filtered down through all the strata of the English commonalty till you found beggars violent in defence of the privileges which had brought them to destitution; mere race antagonism was stronger than any other feeling.

All this while from his fourteenth to his sixteenth year Jack was perpetually plagueing his father to let him go to sea. For reasons he couldn't divine his father at first wouldn't hear of it, but the boy's impulse was too strong to be overcome. He was always down at the little port talking to the sailors, forever begging to go out on this cruise or on that. The wild free life

and the desire to see other countries worked as a ferment in him. When he was about sixteen his father made the last stand and came to a partial concession.

"A sailor's life is a dog's life," he said to the boy, "and you'll have money when I die. I'm a good bit older than people think and I want you in the Inn. Hard knocks and hard tack is all you'll get at sea."

But Jack's mind was made up. War had begun to be talked about as something inevitable and the excitement of it and the idea of victory tempted him irresistibly. At length his father consented with some reluctance to let him go on board the *Dolphin* and at any rate try a sailor's life under favourable conditions.

Jack knew something already about the craft and the crew. The *Dolphin* was a cutter of about forty tons burden which his father had had built according to his own design. He wanted speed above everything and his idea was that a ship to be fast should have the shape of a fish, the dolphin for preference or the dog-fish; a fairly bluff bow that is with a long tapering quarter; "a fine run" as sailors term it.

The idea must have had something in it for both Morgan's smacks were faster and more sea-

worthy than any other small craft about the coast.

Jack's first fishing cruises taught him something about the men. The skipper Bill Gosport was a fine sailor, knowing all waters and weathers and even more at home in a big square-rigged ship than in a cutter. Though hardly above middle height he was broad and strongly made; his face rough hewn, dark and forceful; his manner sullen. A silent man who only talked at all to those he trusted or liked. He had been in the American navy, but why he had left it no one could divine, for he had nothing but praise for it.

Jack's prime favourite on board the *Dolphin* at first was a sailor called Weetman. He seemed to Jack of a better class than the rest; and Jack was unconsciously a good deal of a snob; he had a native love of distinction which had shown itself already in his admiration of young Barron and his courtly manners. Weetman's language was above his station and though Jack felt that the fellow wasn't really a gentleman, yet he was always amiable, and even after Jack found out that he had periodical fits of drunkenness he couldn't resist the charm of the sailor's chanties which Weetman trolled out in a rich baritone voice. Weetman, too, was the only sailor on board except Gosport who had knocked about the

world. He had learned negro songs and dances in the West Indies and his considerable mimetic power revealed a new world to the boy's eager imagining.

Looking back after some years over his first cruise Jack couldn't help noticing that the men whom he liked the best at first and who made the deepest impression on him were not the best or even the most important. He knew Gibby, Weetman, Gosport and Knight almost immediately, but Newton and Riding he only came to appreciate after long experience. Good men he found like most other good things take some time to fathom.

There was a great deal in his father's trade which Jack did not understand even at sixteen. He had already made many fishing cruises and had noticed that when they came across a shoal of herrings or of mackerel the catch glutted the village, and in consequence the fish were almost worthless; herrings often sold for twopence a hundred and mackerel even cheaper. What then was the good of fishing? And why were the smacks so large and fast? Smaller and less expensive craft would have supplied the demand.

Jack's first real cruise taught him the answer to all such questions. His father went with him on

board the *Dolphin* one afternoon while Gibby followed them shouldering Jack's small sea-chest. There was a little cabin in the stern of the *Dolphin* where Gosport and Riding messed, and this tiny room made up at night three berths, one of which was set aside for Jack. The rest of the men slept in hammocks in the fo'castle.

On the way down to the quay his father surprised Jack:

"I'm going to treat you from now on," he said, "like any other sailorman."

The boy was intensely pleased.

"I shall offer you drink as I do the others, but I want you to promise me you'll take no spirits till you're over twenty-one. A glass of wine won't hurt ye."

Jack promised eagerly. To be treated like a man was worth any sacrifice.

When they got on board his father showed him where to stow his things and where he was to sleep. He then called Gosport and Riding down and had a talk with the two over glasses of rum grog. In the aftertime Jack could never forget the thrill of delight he felt when his father said to him carelessly:

"Will you have a glass, Jack?"

"No, thanks," replied Jack valiantly. "I'm

not going to drink—at any rate," he added, "not yet," for he had caught a look of surprise on Gosport's face. At the same moment Riding broke into an uproarious laugh which Jack couldn't understand at the moment.

"It's about time for the equinoctials," his father remarked a little later. "In a week or so, we should have dirty weather and dark nights."

Gosport nodded.

This was all that appeared at the time significant to Jack, but he noticed just before leaving the cabin that his father gave Riding a pocket-book.

Jack followed him to the quay when he landed. In silence the pair walked together to where the land rose sharply.

"Take care of yourself, my boy," said his father, stopping and shaking hands, "and don't be rash. Your blood's too hot. You'll have to learn prudence. Remember what I say and keep a quiet tongue in your head; least said soonest mended."

Suddenly a light seemed to flood Jack's mind.

"We're going smuggling?" he questioned.

His father turned on him: "You're perhaps going to Bordeaux," he said, "and not Boulogne; see everything and say nothing."

"Why did you give the money to Riding?" the boy persisted.

"I trust Riding with money," his father answered, "and Gosport with the smack. They're a good pair. Now be a man and keep your own counsel. Learn all you can and be cautious."

As the boy turned away and walked along the quay he felt mightily uplifted. His father had treated him like a man and already he enjoyed the feeling of a man's power and a man's responsibility. When he got on deck the crew were at the windlass heaving up the anchor and Weetman's voice rang over the water in a chanty whose freedom delighted the lad:

Round the rock and into dock; it's "Welcome home, my lover!"
Out of dock and round the rock; it's "Go to hell, you lubber!"

The anchor was soon apeak and when the men came amidships to hoist the mainsail Jack couldn't help tailing on to the main halyards with them while Weetman struck up the second chanty which he used to call "Jack Ashore."

When Jack he comes ashore all the gals he does adore,
and they love him while he has a brown,
But with crimps and drinks and gals he's soon emptied
like his pals, and all his happy luck is down.

But Jack he carries on, till his credit is all gone, and
the landlady meets him with a frown,
Then he turns again to sea; and sets her running free;
and so bids farewell to the girls of the town.

The next morning when Jack awoke and came up on deck there was nothing to be seen but sea and sky, not a sail, not a glimpse of land.

"Where are we?" he asked big Newton, who was steering, "and where is the *Mary?*"

"We lost her in the night," said Newton, looking down significantly at the compass in front of him. Jack saw that the course was south-east and by south and took the hint.

All day long they held the course without sighting a vessel; in the afternoon one incident taught him more about the character of the skipper and the men than months of ordinary companionship. He noticed with pleasure when he came up on deck that Gosport kept all the ropes coiled down neatly, man-o'-war fashion, and the decks clean enough to eat from. The wind being on the quarter and holding steadily they rigged out a square sail and for some reason or other, probably carelessness, Gibby coiled down a rope very badly.

"Here," cried Gosport, "is that ship-shape, you lubber?"

"Right enough," replied Gibby impudently, evidently presuming on his position as a relative of the owner and the fact that the owner's son was looking on.

"None of your lip," cried Gosport, and with the word struck him heavily in the face. Gibby attempted to strike back, but the next moment was hurled down by a furious rush of the skipper. Though not yet come to his full size Gibby was so big and powerful that Jack had thought he could easily beat any of the men on board. Now to his astonishment Gibby lay on the deck for some seconds without moving and as soon as he struggled to his knees he was felled again by another heavy blow which covered him with blood.

The brutal cruelty of the blow roused Jack's anger and disgust and he sprang to Gosport's side and caught hold of his arm.

"Don't do that," he cried; "you'll kill him."

Gosport threw the boy off and for a moment looked as if he would strike him; then he turned again to the prostrate Gibby.

"Get up, ye swab," he cried, kicking him savagely in the ribs, "get up and flemish that rope down man-o'-war style."

Gibby rose slowly and to Jack's astonishment

took hold of the rope and began to lay it in a Flemish coil. As soon as Gosport saw that he was obeyed he turned and went aft without more ado. Jack couldn't help looking with pity at Gibby's white bleeding face, but he quickly discovered that the brutal correction had no softening effect on the men; indeed Knight took the occasion to laugh and jeer at Gibby.

"Ah, fat boy," he cried, "so ye got a warming, did ye?"

"I'll give you one, if you don't look out," growled Gibby.

"Come and try," jeered Knight, "I'll beat ye so that yer mother won't know yer, ye d—d swine!"

Jack gazed at him in astonishment, for Knight was thin and slight in comparison with Gibby. Evidently he had been mistaken in all his estimates.

A little later he took the opportunity of asking Weetman whether he thought Knight could beat Gibby? Weetman was not inclined to talk about them, but at length he said:

"Knight, you see, is half a gipsy and Gibby hasn't come to his strength yet. Knight might beat him now, though in five or six years more

Gibby'll probably be stronger than anyone on board."

"Isn't Gosport a brute?" Jack questioned further; but Weetman would only answer, "He's the skipper," and drew away.

Jack understood that his father was right; there was a good deal to learn even on board the little cutter and not much use in talking. He began to look at all the men with a more curious and more discerning eye.

The wind held fair and strong on the quarter all day, and the next morning they altered their course to the eastward, and two hours later came in sight of the sand dunes and piney hillocks of the French coast. That evening they picked up the lights at the entrance of the river and some hours after midnight anchored off Bordeaux. In half an hour the *douaniers* came on board, and to his surprise Jack found that Riding could talk French fluently, while Gosport and Weetman seemed to understand most of what was said. In a few minutes all the formalities were fulfilled and everyone turned in. The boy could hardly sleep for excitement.

Next morning they warped alongside the dock and Jack was wonder-filled with the new sights and sounds and odours; the quays flooded with

sunshine; the strange lingo, the polite people who took off their hats to everyone, and called everyone "citoyen," the fisher-girls who laughed coquettishly answering his eyes. Gosport gave one watch their liberty and Riding asked Jack if he'd like to go with him into the town. Jack assented and accompanied him to quiet office after office, but between whiles they traversed streets and squares gayer, brighter and noisier than any Jack had ever imagined, and Riding's few words of explanation made most things clear. They dined in a little restaurant. Jack had never had so tasteful a meal or one so well served; the white linen, the thin wine, crusty bread and black coffee—everything delighted him.

The early afternoon was spent on board with Riding invoicing kegs of brandy and seeing them stowed away by Knight and Widdison the port watch. But after four the work was all done and Riding and he went up into the town again while Widdison, who looked like a German though he came from Ipswich, washed and made ready with Knight for the night's enjoyment. Their steps led them idly towards the centre of the town, or perhaps they followed an unacknowledged attraction and went with the majority of people. Whatever may be the cause, Riding and Jack soon

found themselves in front of the Hotel de Ville, or Mansion House. It was a sort of centre for a great concourse of country people who seemed for the most part to be workers in vineyards and day labourers: most of them were equipped or armed with the instruments of their calling, quaint three-pronged picks or pitchforks. The sight of them horrified Jack: their poverty, their destitution, was almost incredible; no one had decent clothes; nearly all—men and women alike—were half naked, spectres of famine with skeleton limbs, naked feet thrust into open wooden shoes, and pinched, pale, hatchet faces. As he skirted the crowd, one scarecrow after another brought Jack to gasping. A couple of old women in particular drew his eye: one witch with wisps of grey hair about her shoulders was dressed in a man's cast-off trowsers, which she held together with a square of brown carpet that half hid her hanging brown breasts and stringy turkey-neck: the other had nothing on but a coarse straw sack beneath which her wizened legs stuck out like the black branches of a tree in winter. The boy was all amazement as he passed by quickly: he felt ashamed even to see such misery.

Of a sudden the side door of the Hotel de Ville opened and a distribution began of loaves of

bread. The people pressed towards the door hungrily, but Jack could not help remarking a certain restraint, a certain courtesy even which astonished him. He noticed, too, that as a rule the men began at once to eat the long sticks of bread; while the women carried them off intact, evidently to be shared at home with those whose needs were still greater than their own.

"Why are they hungry?" he asked Riding.

Riding could only shrug his shoulders and ask one of the passers-by for information.

"The people think it's the king and the nobles who prevent them from getting bread," said the Frenchman, with the indifference of the well-to-do.

"There is no government, no order," he went on; "no one knows from day to day what will happen. We feed the starving, but things get worse: the loaves of bread don't go round," and indeed while they were looking on, the door of the *Mairie* was shut and the crowd in front swayed to and fro, cursing and gesticulating indignantly: every now and then shouts arose with menace in the tone: "Bread, bread! . . . we must have bread!"

Jack couldn't get the famine spectres of women and children out of his head: at length the puzzle of it and the wretchedness of the people became

so painful to him that he ached to get away from it all. He felt in tutelage, too, so long as he walked with Riding, and he wanted to be free: he burned to get with the others and enjoy life.

"Why shouldn't we join the others?" he asked at length.

"You don't want to get drunk, do you," replied Riding, "and spend what money you've got to buy a sick headache?"

"No," said Jack, struck by the reasonableness of the appeal which, however, didn't satisfy his curiosity or his desire of emancipation.

A little later they met another crowd of famished people who had evidently heard of the distribution of bread at the Mansion House, and were hurrying to share in it. These late-comers tore along frantically eager and excited, and Jack and Riding were tossed apart by them and separated. Jack made no particular effort to discover his companion, and as soon as he found himself alone he made his way to the dock and the little quay-side café, where the English sailors were taking their pleasure after their own fashion.

Jack's entrance was greeted with shouts of joy.

"Have a drink, Jack?" cried Gibby, who had a fat woman on his knee at one end of the low table which stood in front of the bar.

"Come here, lad," cried Weetman with a hiccup from the end of the room to the left, "and I'll baptize you."

Smiling at Gibby and his frowsy companion as he passed, Jack went on towards Weetman. He was horrified to see that Weetman's companion was an old woman who leered at him and called him "Mon chou," though she was older than his mother and had only two black teeth in her mouth. He was so taken aback that he stared at her, and the more he stared the more she leered, and the yellow-black stumps in her lower jaw waggled as she smiled.

"Viens donc, mon petit chou!" and she made a place for him.

Weetman must have noticed Jack's shrinking, for he cried out boisterously:

"Come on, lad, come on and have a drink," and he poured out a glassful of red wine as he spoke and pushed it across the wet table towards Jack.

"Nothing like an old fiddle for a good tune, lad," he went on; "have a drink and I'll give ye a song and dance—eh?"

"A dance and song, old man," cried Widdison from the other side of the room; and at once Weetman rose and began promenading up and down, while an old fiddler, whom Jack had not

seen huddled up against the corner of the bar, began to play a sort of dance tune. Weetman's antics interested Jack intensely. Excited as he was he kept time to the music with heel and toe; indeed the drink, with its bold abandon, lent an inimitable touch of savagery to his caricature of a negro-buck showing off.

After calling on them all to join in the chorus, he began to sing; even the landlord behind the bar beat time on his zinc counter while his little beady black eyes danced with amusement.

My ole massa promis' me: (Chorus) Bowna get a home bime by.
When 'e die 'e set me free; (Chorus) Bowna get a home bime by.

When this had been sung twice the refrain came in with a strange lift of poetry, which added the last touch of spiritual similitude to the grotesque display.

So wayhay you water lilies to the land ob music we shall fly,
I'm a gwine to join the gay old band, I'se gwine to get a home bime by.

Again the dance went on with renewed vigour and indecent gestures, while Weetman trolled out the next verse:

My ole Massa, dead and gone; Bowna get a home bime by.
He's dead and gone, an' a good job, too; Bowna get a home bime by.

Again the refrain:

So wayhay, you water lilies to the land ob music we shall fly,
I'se gwine to join the gay old band; I'se gwine to get a home bime by.

In spite of himself Jack couldn't help laughing and joining in the chorus: "So wayhay, you water lilies," was irresistible, and "Bowna get a home bime by," sang itself to the ear.

"Another drink," cried Weetman, stopping in front of the bar; "drinks all round, you black-eyed lubber," he cried to the landlord, adding, "you must drink, too."

The landlord got up, smiling, and the whole throng crowded together in front of the bar and drank a fiery Schnapps. Jack waved the glass of wine which had been given to him by Weetman and drank a sip or two of that. As they thronged to the bar he noticed that Widdison's girl was black-eyed and rather good-looking. Then suddenly, as she turned to him, he saw that she had a dreadful squint. She smiled at him ingratiatingly,

and the smile had something uncanny in it, for one eye seemed to be looking at his feet, while the other was gazing straight into his.

After drinking, the crowd all lurched back to their seats, while the fiddler struck up again and Weetman began again in front of the bar his fantastic imitation of the negro-buck. There was something grotesquely comic in Weetman's dancing—something intensely vivid and real in his caricature of the negro dandy, strutting and posturing, and the quaint words of the song bit the picture in unforgettably: *Wayhay, you waterlilies. . . .*

In the intervals between the songs and dances and the drinks all round, Jack's eyes were drawn irresistibly to the women. Knight, he noticed, had a mere girl, a slip of a thing that didn't appear to be more than fifteen, though she was probably eighteen or nineteen. She was so undersized and thin that she reminded Jack in some vague way of the famine-spectres of the Mansion House. She was shy, too; for he looked at her again and again before he caught a glimpse of her face; and then was astonished by the life and quick withdrawal of dark eyes.

Weetman's old woman was evidently the leader of the gang: she continually led the conversation

in broken English pieced out with words of French—a jargon which seemed intelligible to everyone, though Jack found difficulty in understanding it. Widdison's black-eyed girl with the squint kept contradicting her, and every now and then the two had a hot altercation in French, which appeared to amuse both Weetman and Widdison, for they showed their approval by exciting their companions one against the other, as if they had been dogs: meanwhile Gibby's frowsy fat partner drank silently, perseveringly, as indeed did Gibby himself. Jack noticed once that when she turned on his cousin's knee to laugh at the old woman she utilized the position to slide her hand into Gibby's pocket and take his purse, which she slipped into her dress immediately with the adroitness of long practice.

Suddenly the old woman called on Berthe to dance. Berthe was Knight's girl, and the two sat interlaced in the dark corner mouth on mouth: she couldn't be made to attend for some time, and when the call did reach her she pretended not to hear, and went on kissing. But after one or two calls the old woman scurried across and dragged the girl in spite of her resistance and mutinous face into the middle of the room, while screaming to the fiddler for a new tune. As the music struck

into a wild measure, the girl began to dance with all sorts of strange contortions which showed off her slim body. The old woman cried to her:

"Enlève ta robe, ènlève ta robe."

The girl made a face back at her; but when she substituted the cry: "Take off de dress," the sailors all joined in "Off with the dress; off with the dress."

The girl stopped for a moment and pulled off her dress and then took the floor again, dancing now with a wild grace and complete abandon. Still the old woman wasn't satisfied.

"Up wid yer jupe; up wid yer jupe?" she kept squealing, and the sailors howled, laughing, "Up with it, up with it."

At length, casting all shame to the winds, the girl seized her thin orange petticoat in both hands, and, pulling it up, tied it between her legs in a knot, so that her round brown legs were exposed to mid-thigh; while the upper part of her breast and arms were also bare. Again she began to dance: the music grew faster and faster and she pirouetted and whirled about till she reminded Jack of a russet leaf spun about in a high wind. The naked round brown limbs and lithe figure had a feverish fascination for him. He stared with all his eyes. He had no notion that the

human body was capable of such writhings, and there was something lustful and exciting in the mad delirium of the posturing. Suddenly the performance was ended by the girl coming crash to the floor with her legs outstretched in the "splits."

Jack looked at the girl curiously while she rose, undid her petticoat, shook herself and slid into her dress again like an eel: she must have felt his gaze upon her, for while buttoning her dress she lifted her eyes to his. Her gaze pierced Jack to the soul: there was physical contact in it, and as she passed she suddenly seized his head in her hands and kissed him on the mouth.

"Ce gosse me va," she cried.

"Belay that," cried Knight from his dark corner. "I can give you all ye want, ye bitch."

Jack sat dazed, with burning face and throbbing heart, unable to think or move, so intense was the sensation.

At a word from the old woman the black-eyed girl with the squint began to sing a sentimental wailing ditty in which all the women joined. Suddenly in the middle Gibby's fat companion, who had been singing with a hoarse contralto that told of rum and night air, burst into tears, which enraged the old woman, who came over to her and

shook and slapped her. Suddenly the tears ceased and the frowsy one retaliated, scratching the old woman's face till the blood came. In a trice the bottles on Gibby's table were thrown over, and he was flooded with the contents, while the two women tore out each other's hair by handsful and scratched and thumped each other till the squinting girl and Weetman separated them.

When peace was at length re-established, Weetman was called upon for another song and, in spite of the fact that, as Gibby said, his "back teeth were awash," he got up again and began lurching about while humming a negro hymn tune, which the fiddler, however, found difficulty in fitting with music. But the sailors wouldn't have the hymn: Widdison shouted for a bawdy song and all the rest joined in; and at length Knight took the floor, humming a tune which the fiddler caught at once; then, in a clear tenor, he began a weird gipsy song:

When my Dimber Dell I courted
  She had youth and beauty, too,
Wanton joys my heart transported,
  And her wap was ever new.
But conquering time doth now deceive her,
  Which her pleasures did uphold;
All her wapping now must leave her,
(Repeat) For, alas! my dell's grown old.

All your comfort, Dimber Dell,
Since you've lost your flower prime,
Is that every cull can tell
You have not misus'd your time.
There's not a prig or palliard living
Who's not been your slave inroll'd.
Then cheer your heart, and cease your grieving;
(Repeat) You've had your time, tho' now grown old.

The success of the song appeared to annoy Weetman, who soon grew angry with Knight and rolled across the room—"to knock eyes into him"; as he said; but on the way he staggered into a seat and fell to snoring. The old woman and the landlord carried him bodily into his corner and left him to sleep in his armchair.

Weetman's drunken rage had a curious effect on Jack: it seemed to awaken him and make him conscious of something squalid and bestial in the whole scene. As long as the men were excited and gay he had been excited, too, and worked up; but as the drunkenness became maudlin, the sordid brutality of the orgy revolted him.

He watched his opportunity, and when Gibby's back was turned, managed to get outside into the cool starlit night.

He didn't want to go on board the ship at once: sleep was impossible to him. His head was hot with the fetid atmosphere; his blood aflame with

the unaccustomed wine and the new sensations. He walked about the docks and stood long in the moonlight, drawing in deep draughts of the cool, sweet, sea-scented air. Towards midnight he went below and turned in. But the girl's clinging lips followed him in his dreams.

CHAPTER IV

THE next day passed for Jack in a whirl. He noticed, half unconsciously, that bales of silk done up in oil-cloth were taken on board all the morning: he knew, too, that about midday Gosport and Riding made up their minds to return home at once: the hold was nearly full, the cargo valuable and the weather looked threatening, the clouds banking up as if for a westerly gale. Jack took no part in the discussion, and kept aloof from the ordinary work. He was strangely silent. Life had crowded in on him too quickly. He couldn't assimilate all the previous day had brought him: he had been shaken by extremes of pity and of passion, and his spiritual centre of gravity, so to speak, once disturbed, took some time to settle down and adjust itself: his deeper nature was all a-quiver.

New knowledge, too, had flowed in on his mind like a tide. He felt now that he knew Weetman and Widdison, Gibby and Knight better than he had known anyone in the world the previous day.

He half divined Berthe, too, in her precocious sensuality, and the old woman in her miserly greed and resolution; he knew them both far better than he knew his own sister.

He went about half dazed by the new glaring light thrown on all things. He saw, without looking, that the sailors were all upset by the previous night's debauch; even Weetman could not raise a chanty as they hoisted the canvas and stood out to sea, almost in the teeth of a sou'wester.

When they had gained an offing and set the course for home the wind was fair, and as it rose to a gale shortly after six o'clock the little craft skimmed from roller to roller like a sea-bird.

In the next day or two Jack's mind came quietly to its new moorings. The true hierarchy of the little crew became clear to him: he saw that the Gibbys, Widdisons, and Knights, and even the Weetmans hardly counted. He noticed, too, that Riding talked to him much more freely than aforetime.

On the fifth day the gale increased steadily and the waves ran high; towards nightfall they raised the English coast and about ten o'clock were opposite Hurstpoint; they hove-to about seven miles from land and waited; but the seas broke over the little craft in green mounds, and they had to

rig out a sea-anchor to protect her. At midnight precisely they showed two lights one above the other—"Is the coast clear?" A moment later a red light appeared in the Inn—"Great danger."

What was to be done? had a blue light appeared, which signified that the coastguard were alert, they might have risked something, but the red light meant worse than risk. What was it?

Gosport and Riding met in the little cabin to decide, and Riding asked Jack to come with them. Gosport thought that the gale was only beginning and advised an immediate retreat from the dangerous lee-shore. Riding proposed to slip up the coast out of sight of any eyes that might be watching about Hurstpoint. Riding's view was adopted, and when the morning broke they were forty or forty-five miles away to the nor'ard.

Gosport was mistaken in one thing; the gale had blown itself out: by noon it had died away to a fitful light breeze and the sea, too, was going down. By midnight they were again off Hurstpoint, and again asked the same question with the lantern with the same result. What was the meaning of it?

In the meantime Jack had been thinking the matter over: the red light shown twice could, he

thought, only be explained in one way: for neither Gosport nor Riding had ever had two such warnings in succession: a revenue cutter, he guessed, was lying in wait in the little port. It would, therefore, be impossible to "run" their cargo. At the same time Jack felt that if, under these conditions, the coastguard men could be outwitted they might believe in future that *The Dolphin* was only used for legitimate trading. Could this be done?

He thought it might be managed, so he proposed to load the boat with brandy and sink the kegs half a mile outside the breakwater, so that they could be fished up at any favorable moment: they would, of course, be buoyed. If he were then landed on the other side of the Head he could tell his father where the brandy was, and leave it to him to regain possession of it later. But could anything be done with the silk?

"Certainly," Riding broke in, "it can be left with our agents at Boulogne, and kept there till the coast's clear." Jack's plan was therefore adopted, and a few hours later he found himself walking over the headland towards the *Robin Hood.*

His father let him into the Inn, and was de-

lighted that it was his son who had divined the presence of the revenue-cutter; he approved, too, of all that had been done.

A couple of days later the *Dolphin* appeared with half a load of fish purchased from a French fishing smack at Boulogne, and the revenue men, after searching in vain for contraband, took their craft to sea again.

A week later the brandy was in the *Robin Hood,* and the bales of silk on their way to London.

That first cruise, and especially the experiences at Bordeaux, had worked a revolution in Jack: they had turned him from a boy into a man. When he met his school-fellows again in the street or on the quay they seemed to him to be children; even the gentlemen who came to the Inn no longer excited his respect. When Sir George Barron talked of the French as "wild beasts," and hoped that Pitt would soon declare war and exterminate them all, he didn't know whether to laugh or merely shrug his shoulders: he saw again the starving figures in front of the Hotel de Ville and recalled the touching courtesy which they had shown in spite of their hunger. Even when Captain Nugent made fun of the new doctrines of equality and fraternity, he no longer carried Jack

with him: the youth felt that there was a good deal to be said on the other side.

From this time dated a certain estrangement between Jack and his former associates and surroundings, which became perhaps the chief fact in his mental life, for this alienation induced him to think for himself on all matters, and so the distance between him and the villagers of Hurstpoint increased continually. With Riding's help he began to study French, and now learned more in an hour than he had learned at school in a year: in a short time he understood all that was said to him, and was able to explain himself to some extent in the strange tongue.

He was encouraged, too, by feeling that he had grown in influence with his father and the sailors. Riding had evidently given him the credit for divining the presence of the revenue cutter and the subsequent plan which saved the cargo, and both his father and the others now treated him as someone whose opinion was worth hearing. Their respect gave him self-confidence and trust in his own judgment, and this self-confidence and the habit of thinking for himself were both fostered by the life he led.

During the next year he made several trips to France; now to Havre, now to Bordeaux: Bou-

logne was, of course, nearer, but the road to Boulogne was strewn with fast English revenue cruisers, which made smuggling impossible. Indeed, as the English dislike of the French and their doings grew and intensified, smuggling became more and more difficult, and Jack's first cruise in 1793 was destined to be his last smuggling cruise for many a year.

He chose mid-January for the expedition, and arrived at Bordeaux in wild weather on the 23rd. To his astonishment he could scarcely recognize the town. It was all in an uproar. The bells were ringing from a hundred steeples, the tocsin sounding at every corner; the country people had crowded into the town and mingled with the townsfolk, who were all in the street. News had come that the traitor king had been executed in Paris—the baker monarch who had refused bread to his people. That and the great victory of Dumouriez at Jemappes were in everyone's mouth. Strange to say the victory over the Austrians seemed to the Bordelais more important than the execution of the king. The victory at Valmy had been only a partial victory, and might have been the result of chance, but Jemappes was a glory, and made all Frenchmen realize their essential unity. What did the king matter?

What, after all, did any traitor matter? *Ça ira; ça ira.*

In spite of foreign invasion *Ça ira;* the very paving stones of the street gave tongue triumphantly.

The poverty and distress, however, had not diminished, famine still stalked the land: one in every three persons without even potatoes enough to eat: unnumbered thousands of children perishing of starvation and cold. The loss and fear had turned mothers into Mænads and furies, as Jack was soon to see. But for the moment famine, destitution, death itself were forgotten, swallowed up in wild exultation. Joy shone from every face: strangers embraced, kissing each other on both cheeks; elderly citizens went about waving their hats and cheering; the younger folk pranced along singing and shouting. In front of the Hotel de Ville Jack saw thousands dancing the Carmagnole round three gigantic bonfires, which threw the leaping, tossing figures into fantastic silhouettes.

Hope and joy had awakened their sleeping sister, charity: good, kind people—true gentlefolk these, and not traitors and aristos—had come together in a great subscription, *"don patriotique,"* and bread and wine had been distributed: *Ça ira,*

ça ira. As they danced round the bonfires and the warmth penetrated to their chilled bones, the women and men kicked off their sabots and danced barefooted higher and higher: *Ça ira! Ça ira!*

All night long the town was drunk with the heady new wine of victory and hope, and in the morning, and for many a morning after, proof of the new courage was to be seen on every hand. The killing of the king had got rid of an incubus: everyone felt lighter now that the old man of the sea had been shaken from their shoulders. But soon the leaden cloud of poverty and destitution settled down on them again: inexorable necessity pressing heavily: but now they no longer felt inclined to suffer in patience; now they would strike back and they struck savagely, blindly. News came to Bordeaux that chateaux were being burnt in every direction; the "defenders of the fatherland" were out in force everywhere, and with them red ruin.

For some four or five days Riding found it almost impossible to do any business. The cognac merchants were not in their offices. Every night he met Jack with a story of fresh disappointments. But the first brandy merchant he saw changed his tune. The paper money, the "assignats," he

found, were everywhere discredited and looked on as worthless; but gold, foreign coins or French, had risen in equal measure.

The brandy merchants were eager to sell the old brandy of ten or twenty years ago, the treasures of the cellar, at the ordinary price of new brandy, and Riding made up his mind to wait and bargain. Meanwhile he and Jack went about and watched events. Jack bought an *assignat* of 200 livres for two francs and kept it as a memento.

He was much amused to see that the land was being taken by the people while the late king's head still figured on the bond.

Two scenes from that time etched themselves indelibly in his mind. He had been through the town for two or three hours, and had been followed by a crowd of starving children. He went about looking for a baker's shop to buy bread, with the small coins he had in his pocket, but could find none open; the bakers' shops were all closed. As soon as the little raggamuffins divined his intention they swarmed about him; the knot of ten or twenty in a few minutes became hundreds: all little children of both sexes half naked, who followed him in silence with hungry eyes, but without begging and without entreaty. At length he found a cheap restaurant and went in and bought

some bread and came out with the restaurant-keeper and distributed it to the hungriest at the door. In a moment it was all gone. The restaurant-keeper could only shrug his shoulders, and the little white wedge faces seemed to have increased and not diminished in number. Again and again Jack went in and bought bread for them till he had no more money in his pocket. The pathos of it all drove him out of the town into the country, and he didn't return till nightfall.

As he passed through one street he came on a crowd of poor wretches in front of a closed house, which he found was that of a usurer who lent money till the next Saturday—*à la petite semaine,* as it was called. A number of the poorest people had gathered in front of the door at nightfall, so as not to be seen pawning their poor household necessaries; but Maître Guyot, frightened by their numbers or by the tales of robbery that were going about, had shut up his house and now lay close. As the crowd grew, some knocked on his door and became insistent. Just as Jack came up, Guyot put his head, with an old grey nightcap on, out of a window on the first floor and said he had stopped lending: he had no more money. Hope deferred for hours had sharpened the temper of the crowd, and the usurer's decla-

ration that he had no money seemed to the people derision. Murmurs went up on all hands and wild cries of "Bread, bread," which soon became a hoarse continuous chant, lilted to a sort of measure: "Bread, bread: we must have bread"; *il nous faut du pain.*

Just above the usurer's door a lantern stuck out with a flickering oil lamp at the end, and Jack, who had gone up some steps at a house on the other side of the street, could see by the flickering gleams a clear half circle of the tossing, gesticulating crowd. Suddenly a woman, who had been waiting, found that the little baby in her arms had died: the shock and loss turned her brain; holding up the tiny half-naked figure, she screamed: "What'll you lend on it, Guyot, now you've killed it!"

The effect of the mad cry was startling: Guyot disappeared as first one woman and then another rushed at the shutters and shook them with skinny arms; then the foremost men began to beat upon the door, and in a moment, as it seemed, the shutters were torn away, the windows broken, the door battered down, and the mob surged into the house.

From within came cries and shouts, torn with a scream, and then the ringleaders burst out

dragging the owner with them. One big man was holding the usurer by the back of the neck and shaking him like a terrier a rat, and to this man's arm a fury was clinging who had taken off her wooden sabot and was beating the usurer's head with it. As they came into the light Jack caught a glimpse of the fellow's white face streaming with blood, wild-eyed in an agony of terror. The next moment a rope was found and in a trice Maître Guyot was slung up to the lantern over his own door: his usury all ended.

While he was still swinging the women went on beating and scratching at him till they had torn all his clothes from him and the corpse hung there naked, shameless, insensible.

Suddenly a woman, who had been clawing the naked limbs, in an ecstasy of rage, held up a long strip of flesh, squealing:

"Look, look, there's no blood in him, the damned miser! no blood!" and indeed the blood had ceased to flow from the meagre body. The phrase and gesture lived with Jack for years.

Meanwhile the house had been sacked from cellar to roof-tree. Jack saw people munching the bread and meat and drinking the wine they had found, while others of the crowd were pull-

ing on the usurer's clothes or wrapping themselves in his bedgear.

Suddenly someone broke into a song and immediately the crowd began dancing the *Carmagnole* about the door, the women kicking up their legs and exposing themselves in an outburst of savage joy and triumph.

Jack hurried away; but the scene went with him: he could shut his eyes and see the thin body of the usurer dangling to and fro with the blood staining his forehead and face, and his legs, from which the flesh hung in strips like bark—a dreadful, ominous sign, Jack felt—a portent if ever there was one.

Two or three days later the second picture.

Jack had learned that Tallien, with his bristly red head, reigned now in Bordeaux, Tallien the fiery hot man, and Isabeau, his lieutenant, with their revolutionary followers, "the red nightcaps," as they were called. By and by he heard that the prison was filled with aristocrats who had been found guilty and sentenced to death by Tallien's Tribunal. Jack had seen the guillotine set up in the square, but it was pure chance that he came across the *cortège* taking the new criminals to their doom. First of all a band of soldiers rigged out, as it seemed to Jack, in the queerest costumes.

He couldn't take his eyes off their steeple-like hats banded with yellow and gold. Behind them came a detachment of town guards, all Bordelais, whose only uniform seemed to be a cockade, the red, white and blue rosette of the new tricolour or national flag. Then surrounding the prisoners' death-carts tramped a band of Tallien's "Bonnets Rouges," all in red caps with tricolour waistcoats, black trousers and spencers, with defiant, long, black moustaches for the most part, and enormous sabres with brass handles, carved to represent a cock's head, and round these true "defenseurs de la patrie" wisps of ragged children of both sexes dancing, cheering, squealing in a state of frantic excitement.

In the middle three tumbrils, high two-wheeled carts, creaked along filled with prisoners, and accompanying them a vast crowd of men and women of the lowest class.

Jack stared with all his eyes: he had never imagined such mad rage or misery: right in front of him ran men naked to the waist, who paused every now and then to shake dirty fists at the prisoners and scream insults at them—"scoundrels, traitors, aristos!" Near him women looking more like demons than human beings, one of them clothed in nothing but a blanket held to-

gether by a broad leathern girdle at the waist. As she scurried along, the blanket now and then swung aside, showing her nudity: at other times it flapped about her starved figure as a flag flaps round its pole. Another fury with floating red hair, dressed in a man's coat, which left her legs bare like a fowl's, went shrieking by as if mad: then came a knot all together dancing like fiends and shouting jubilantly and gesticulating: never had Jack imagined such wild, hating faces: they fascinated him so that at first he took no notice of the prisoners.

To his astonishment the first tumbril was almost filled with naval officers in their uniforms.

"What have they done?" he asked: one of the crowd replied, passionately, spitting on the ground with rage:

"The naval officers are all aristos," he cried, "traitors to the people: they must all be guillotined—shortened by a head."

"Tous, tous," screamed his neighbours—"all of them, all."

In the next tumbril were some ladies and gentlemen: seated in the middle one lady of stately figure. She was perhaps fifty or thereabouts, with grey hair and set white face of disdain: the women of the street screamed foul words at her:

her dark eyes stared out past them with absolute indifference: suddenly a gentleman turned and spoke to her: Jack stared; he was the living image of old Sir George Barron; he smiled at the lady and waved his hand contemptuously over the crowd with Sir George Barron's very gesture.

In the third tumbril the miserable creatures huddled together and Jack saw only a young girl with pale, frightened face; the great dark eyes were too large for the white triangle of terror which framed them; a long strand of black hair had fallen over her shoulder and hung down in front; she seemed half unconscious with dread. Then came more soldiers riding, the steeple-hats all barred with red and gold, wasp-like, and all round and behind them the mad crowd dancing, shrilling, shouting as if hell had broken loose.

Suddenly the band struck up and, as if by magic, the crowd began to take up the words of the song, shaking all the spaces of the air with the wild challenge of the music.

"What's that, what's that?" cried Jack. Riding questioned a passer-by:

"The song has come from Marseilles," he said, "it's the song of the Revolution. Splendid: isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Jack, his pulses beating

high in spite of himself, "splendid," and almost involuntarily his voice joined in the great chant: "Allons, enfants de la patrie. . . ."

Long after the carts and crowd and soldiers had vanished he could still hear the passionate defiance of the song, and found himself humming the wild melody.

"What does it all mean?" he asked Riding.

Riding stretched out his hands: "You know as much about it as I do," he answered simply: "but that's the hymn of it, I think."

In silence they both went back towards the ship. They had seen the revolution in action, and had heard the defiant soul of it thrilling to Heaven in the Marseillaise.

CHAPTER V

THAT visit to Bordeaux taught Jack that war between England and France was at hand. He knew that Pitt was drifting and being pushed to war by the so-called Tory elements and by King George III, who always declared that his earlier concessions to the Whigs had caused the French revolution as who should say a whirling haulm of straw had caused the wind.

The English, Jack knew, had become hostile and contemptuous, and now he saw that the French had grown prouder than ever of their revolution, which was abolishing sectional differences of speech, costume and thought, and giving them an intenser national life and a national army as well—an army triumphant. The temper on both sides was becoming irreconcilable: the English were simply incapable of understanding the revolution: the French were impatient of criticism and resentful of unfriendliness.

When he reached Hurstpoint again he found that war had been declared, and he was probably

the only person in the village except Riding who deplored the fact. The gentry and clergy were alike jubilant: once again the old flag would go forth to victory. Even Mr. Carrol preached war-like sermons, and the younger folk had all taken the infection still more wildly.

Jack felt as if the people had gone mad; for the life of him he couldn't see what there was to fight about, and when he questioned his father and Riding he could get no satisfaction. His father looked at the matter from a purely business and personal point of view. He told Jack at once that smuggling would certainly be easier now, and he thought of killing two birds with one stone by fitting out the *Dolphin* as a privateer. In this way she might earn double money: he intended to take a hand in the game himself. Jack was surprised to see the look of greed that came into the old man's face as he talked. The son began to realize that his father was utterly unlike the hero he had made of him in his boyhood; he was avaricious, in love with money, intent on gain—cunning rather than heroic. The growing conviction distressed Jack; for some time he refused to harbour the new image.

With every day, it seemed, the abyss between him and his countrymen and even his nearest and

dearest grew wider, and his heart contracted in misery at the mere thought of such estrangement and isolation. The young expect sympathy and affection. For a long time he had no inkling of the fact that such suffering brings its own compensation. This alienation from kinsfolk and country was Jack Morgan's Slough of Despond, the first stage of his pilgrimage. He did not yet know that as the parting was inevitable the sooner it came the better: cuts heal best in young flesh. . . .

There were long conferences in the Inn-parlor between Riding and Gosport and his father, conferences in which Jack sometimes took part. They all wanted to make the *Dolphin* as fast as possible: speed, as his father said, meant power to attack and power to escape at will. Jack was surprised to see that his father had called Chips, the skipper of the *Mary,* into council. The truth was Chips was a born racing Captain; he could get more speed out of a fore-and-after than anyone in Hurstpoint. By his advice lead was substituted for the iron ballast and "bonnets" were fitted to increase the spread of sail: "a capful of wind makes all the difference sometimes," he said, and everyone agreed with the suggestion. But the great discussion arose about the arming: Morgan

suggested three or four six-pound carronades; but Gosport scoffed at the idea: "popguns are no good," he declared, "every ship you meet will carry more guns and heavier: make the *Dolphin* a wasp: give us one long eighteen-pounder and ship it midships on a swivel, abaft the main hatch for choice, and you have a weapon that'll do some damage."

Chips was afraid the recoil of the heavy gun would shake the little craft to pieces and diminish her speed; but Gosport wouldn't have it. "It's only a question of pullies," he argued, "to distribute the strain."

Without having any particular reason to urge Jack agreed with Gosport and was glad to see that his father, too, was convinced by the man's cocksureness.

The whole project might have ended in talk, however, had it not been for that 1st of June when Admiral Howe beat the French fleet off Brest. The victory called forth an astonishing outburst of patriotic feeling, and while the bonfires were still smouldering on all the heights Morgan decided to send Gosport and Riding in the *Mary* to Portsmouth for the best possible cannon and a large supply of ammunition: the *Dolphin's* crew was to be increased to thirty men;

all the best sailors being taken from the *Mary*, which was to be left as a mere fishing boat and tender to help the *Dolphin* in the smuggling part of the business.

In a couple of months everything was ready. Morgan had been to London and got the authorization to fit out the little craft as a privateer. Riding had bought the big gun and Gosport had had it mounted in the very centre of the vessel: the swivel action and the tackling, too, had all been tested with good results. With native conservatism most of the seamen and all the onlookers on the quay thought the great gun destroyed the look of the taut little craft. "It makes her topheavy," they said; but they really meant that it was new to them, and took away from the cutter's trim lines.

"Let 'em talk," said Gosport, "war is not a matter of looks."

On one of his trips down to the vessel Jack was surprised to meet Crosby walking with young Barron and Captain Nugent.

"When do you start?" asked Nugent.

"The day isn't fixed yet," was Jack's answer.

"I should like to come with you," cried Barron, his fine face flushing with excitement.

"Don't be a fool," said Crosby, contemptuous-

ly, "a privateer is next door to a pirate; *you* couldn't have anything to do with it."

"Why not?" said Jack quietly.

"Because a Barron couldn't," said Crosby, contemptuously.

Jack saw that the fellow was only trying to annoy him, and so, with a nod and smile to Barron, he went his way. Captain Nugent cried after him that he intended to see them off and wish them luck. But the elder Morgan had no taste for ceremonies. He went on board with Jack one evening at nine o'clock, and within an hour they had slipped out to sea under cover of the night. By daybreak they were out of sight of land.

Jack was astonished to find that at the prospect of a fight Gosport became a new man: he threw off all his sullenness, was full of suggestions, and took the lead in an extraordinary way. The day was very calm, so Gosport proposed to rig out a barrel and practice shooting at it from a distance. The elder Morgan yielded to this very reluctantly.

"It will make a great noise," he said, "and may bring some big ships down on us: besides ammunition costs money: what's the good of playing at fighting?"

"The good of playing at fighting," replied Gos-

port, "is that, when the real thing comes, fighting will be playing. Let me alone, governor, and in time you'll see I'm right."

The very first practice shot showed that he was right, for the big gun carried away a couple of the pullies, and in the recoil almost crushed Gibby, who was acting as gunner's mate. But everyone was astonished to find how close the big shot went to the mark—within ten or twelve feet of it, indeed, at three hundred yards. Only Gosport was disappointed. He fitted a sort of wooden thing painted white to the end of the cannon, and this time came even nearer the mark. Riding was intensely interested; said he had never seen such good shooting; but Gosport was far from satisfied. He declared he could do very much better, and would show them on the morrow that he could hit the cask three times out of six in a calm sea, and go quite close to it always. But he had already accomplished a good deal: he had convinced everyone who knew anything about shooting of the truth of his theory, and had inspired the crew with complete confidence in his skill.

As evening drew on they were favoured with a light air from the west, and stood towards the French coast; next morning Jack found the land

like a dim cloud under their lee. They had got down, his father said, between the Channel Islands and St. Malo, and had to keep a sharp lookout. In the afternoon they picked out a couple of big three-masted vessels close in shore, and soon found that one was following them. They jogged along under easy canvas, jib, and a three-reefed mainsail till the stranger came into plain view, and then realising that she was a French frigate they set all sail to increase the distance between them. But the frigate did the like: in a few seconds she was covered with canvas from the royals to the bulwarks, and looked like a great white cloud bellying along. At first she gained on them, but as soon as they clapped on the "bonnets" that Chips had proposed, and a big square topsail, it was found that the little cutter not only held two points closer to the wind than the Frenchman, but also went faster through the water. It was only a question of time and she would weather her and lose her. When the Frenchmen saw this they let their ship fall away and sent a whole broadside at the little cutter. But all they hit was air and sea. The sailors cheered and cheered again, as they saw the shots splashing and skipping half a mile away. The spirits of everyone on board rose higher: Riding

laughed his great laugh: "We have got the heels of 'em all," he cried.

The discharge of the broadside was the last effort of the French ship: a little while afterwards she went about and stood in for the land. An hour later the *Dolphin,* too, was allowed to fall away and headed again for the French coast. Next day when they were off the Sables d'Olonne they caught sight of a French brig hull down ahead going their way; probably a coaster from Dunkirk bound for Bordeaux for wine and brandy. The elder Morgan thought they'd have a look at her, and so they ran up the square topsail and let the cutter travel free. In two hours they could see the brig's hull. The Frenchman must have noticed them, too, but he probably thought the *Dolphin* too small to be dangerous, for he held on his course imperturbably and appeared to pay no attention to his pursuer. As the *Dolphin* crept up suppositions and conjectures flew about. From the fact that the brig didn't try to avoid them most of the sailors were inclined to believe that she was armed. This view commended itself to the elder Morgan.

"I'm afraid it's a trick," he said, watching the brig carefully through half-shut grey eyes. "Keep your course there," he cried to the helmsman,

"we'll pass her on the weather so as to make sure: she's not worth much or she'd try to get out of the way."

Gosport had made up his mind at once, and was busied about his popgun, as he called it. He had adjusted the white painted wooden thing near the muzzle of the gun, and now he had arranged another just in front of the touch-hole. As Jack was beside him, following his movements intently, he explained the contrivance to him.

"They are sights," he said. "If you get this spot in the centre of the V in front and on the object you must shoot straight."

Jack was delighted with the contrivance. "What a good idea," he cried, "is it your own invention?"

"No, no," said Gosport, "it's an American invention, it was the cause of nearly all their victories over our ships in the late war. They had sights on their guns, and that was the reason they shot so much better than we did." *

"What do you think of the brig?" cried Jack.

"A coaster," rejoined Gosport, carelessly,

* Gosport was undoubtedly right. Though never mentioned by any historian, the sights which the Americans invented for their cannon in the revolutionary war was one of the chief causes of their naval superiority.

"with probably six-pound carronades on board and forty or fifty men."

"But can we beat her?" cried Jack.

"You'll soon see," said Gosport, his heavy face alight with confident energy. "Her little milk teeth won't do much against our sting," and he slapped the big eighteen-pounder as he spoke.

All this while the *Dolphin* crew were preparing for the fight in the usual way: pistols were cleaned and charged; cutlasses got out and belted on, and the narrow decks were soon filled with men armed to the teeth, and hoping to come hand to hand with the enemy.

In an hour the *Dolphin* was on the quarter of the brig half a mile to windward. Morgan ran the Union Jack up to the mast head and told Gosport to throw a shot across the brig's bow just to bring her to. But Gosport was not minded to waste his shot. He ran the cutter nearer still and then after careful aim fired: the bowsprit of the brig swayed about gracefully at the same moment and fell into the water, dragging down with it the fore top-mast, and all the jibs. In a second the brig was practically a wreck; but the Frenchmen showed no fear. They managed to yaw the brig and four reports rang out: but she only carried six-pound carronades, so the shots

didn't do much harm, though one of them chipped a piece out of the *Dolphin's* mast.

"Keep her away there, you lubber, keep her away," cried Morgan to the helmsman, "we can pepper her without being touched."

The *Dolphin* then kept her distance, while Gosport fired the big gun as carefully as he could.

Jack was surprised to see the excitement the cannonading called forth among the sailors; most of them had thrown off their jackets, but Gibby and some of the rest had stripped to the waist like prizefighters, and were yelling and cheering and shouting obscenities at every shot like madmen.

"Why don't you keep your clothes on and your mouth shut," cried Gosport to him, contemptuously: "will a cold help you to fight, ye swab?"

Jack felt that Gosport's cool, thoughtful attitude was incomparably more dangerous than the attempt to whip oneself into a rage.

The first few shots fired made little difference, though each of them struck the brig as one could see by the white splinters flying. But the fifth shot had a tremendous effect; the little cutter by this time had forged right ahead of the French brig, and the shot raked her deck, smashing two of the carronades and killing five or six of the men. The Frenchmen fought on pluckily: they

dragged two of the carronades from leeward and mounted them in the place of the disabled ones, and fired again at the English sloop. But their shots fell short, while every one of the *Dolphin's* shots struck home and did damage.

Jack felt at once that there could be only one end to such a one-sided conflict: he couldn't understand why the French captain went on exposing his men to useless slaughter. It was clearly only a question of a few minutes and he must pull down his flag. Suddenly the Dolphins began to cheer: feebly fluttering, the tricolour left the mast and came down to the deck: before the order was given the *Dolphin* crew stood ready to let the boats down.

"Hold fast there," cried Morgan, "load again, Gosport, and stand by to fire; they might be up to some trick."

Then he gave orders to lower away the gig and, at Jack's request, put him into it with Riding and sent six men with them to take possession of the brig. As they stepped on board the vessel the French captain came forward and said sulkily that he hoped for fair treatment. Riding took off his hat and replied in French with all courtesy.

Jack could do nothing but stare at the ship's deck. The brig was much larger than he had

thought, and the deck was a shambles, covered everywhere with splinters of wood and splashes and puddles of blood. For the first time he realized what the fighting had meant in bloodshed. The brig had had sixty men on board: and the big eighteen-pounder had done frightful execution: nine men had been killed outright and seventeen wounded: in the lee scuppers, just opposite to them, there was a decapitated body in a pool of blood, and the head rolling about with staring eyes, as if alive, turned Jack sick. All the fight had been knocked out of the French sailors by the hopelessness of the struggle. A phrase of Gosport's came to Jack's mind as he looked at them all huddled together with downcast faces in the waist of the ship: "You soon get tired of fighting when you can't hit back."

In the meantime one or two of the officers at Riding's request had taken the wounded men down below and were attending to them. Riding arranged with the Captain that some of the French crew should clear away the broken spars and rigging and ship one of the topmasts as a jib boom, and so make it possible to sail the brig again. He sent the gig to the *Dolphin* with Jack to give the news and bring back a dozen men: it would need at least that number, he thought, to

sail the brig to England and keep the French crew in subjection.

The elder Morgan was delighted at Jack's account. He rubbed his hands and told Jack that even without any cargo the brig alone was worth four or five thousand pounds:

"She'll make us rich, my boy," he cried, "now what we must do is to get her home safely. Take some fifteen men and Riding and get her shipshape as quickly as possible, and let us start back. I shall hardly sleep till I see the Head."

Jack filled his boat with men, calling first for those he knew, chiefly old *Dolphin* men and, of course, Weetman, whom he couldn't leave out.

In a few minutes all the Frenchmen were disarmed and confined in the fo'castle, with Widdison armed to the teeth as their guardian. The three officers and the Captain were transferred to the *Dolphin*. In a couple of hours the worst of the damage had been repaired; jury spars rigged, new sails bent, decks cleaned down, and all possible canvas set, and the two vessels were moving side by side towards the English coast.

A little before sunset a light breeze came off the land and at once the brig, her great square-sails all drawing, began to make good way. Before the wind at any rate she was at least as good

a sailor as the cutter, for when they got her fairly going they saw that the cutter had to run out a square-sail to live with them. It soon became clear that on this point of sailing the French brig, with her greater power and length, was superior to the little fore-and-aft sloop. As they slipped through the water about eight knots an hour, the *Dolphin* could hardly keep up with her big captive.

It was with the strangest feelings of pride and excited wonder that Jack went down into the cabin about seven o'clock to have his supper with Riding: the French cook had prepared it; he and his aid had volunteered for the job, and Riding was only too glad of their willingness, for even with twenty Englishmen on board, the brig was rather a handful.

The table was laid with white linen, and the pair sat down to a good meal, washed down with excellent Bordeaux.

"Now this is what I like," said Riding, with one of his great laughs.

"Yes," replied Jack; "but the fight was not a bit what I had imagined a sea-fight would be like."

"It could hardly be called a fight," said Riding, "it was great luck hitting his bowsprit first shot."

"The luck didn't matter," Jack persisted, "it shortened the affair, but that was all: we were always sure of winning thanks to Gosport's brains," he added.

"He's a great shot," laughed Riding, and Jack agreed, but he was hardly satisfied with this view of the matter. Gosport's example had taught him that victory in battle was no longer a question chiefly of courage and endurance: in the future he felt it would be more and more a matter of brains, foresight and preparation, and success could be reckoned upon. The new view made him thoughtful.

A little later Riding resumed the talk:

"I expect the governor will want to sell the brig and put the money by," he began, "but what a pity he doesn't turn her into another privateer, arm her with Gosport's eighteen-pounders and let us go out again with eighty men on board."

Jack took fire at the suggestion. "That's what we must do," he said. . . . "I think I can persuade my father."

When they came up on deck they found that the fair wind had freshened; the *Dolphin's* light still shone clear on their quarter, and so they held on through the night.

The return home was as eventful to Jack as

even the fight and the lesson of Gosport's gunnery. Next morning Riding and he had a talk with the French sailors and, at their request, let half a dozen of them at a time up on deck to help sail the brig. He soon found they were capital fellows, not inferior in bodily strength or quickness to the English, and just as good sailors. When he remarked on this Riding told him that the sailors from the North coast of France were excellent: but the sailors from the Mediterranean and Marseilles, where there is usually fine weather, were not so good: "Bad weather makes good seamen." This brought a phrase of Gosport's about the Americans into Jack's head. Talking of the American sailors one day he surprised Jack by calling them the best seamen in the world.

"Why do you say that?" cried Jack.

"The coast of Maine," replied Gosport, "is the worst in the world, dangerous in itself, and with an awful winter climate: none but good seamen well-fed could stand the strain."

Jack was forced to realise that all handicaps and disadvantages in life call forth higher qualities in men.

The result of the fight had put Gosport on a pinnacle: Riding and the elder Morgan and Jack

at any rate all knew that the happy issue had been due solely to him, and Jack in particular was inclined to take his opinion before that of anyone else. Seizing the first opportunity he asked him what he thought about fitting out the brig as a privateer. To his delight Gosport welcomed the idea enthusiastically.

"The brig's a fine sailor," he said, "though I have seen faster: but properly armed and equipped she'd be a tough customer."

"You'd arm her with eighteen-pounders?" cried Jack, hastily.

"No, no," said Gosport, "the object is to hit without being hit in return. I'd put two thirty-two pounders on her, and a sixty-eight pounder amidships like my popgun there. The brig 'll stand it, she's solidly built."

Nothing would suit Jack but that he should go on board the *Dolphin* at once in order to explain it all, and to persuade his father. Accordingly next morning they signalled to the *Dolphin* and he was rowed on board.

CHAPTER VI

JACK'S enthusiasm was quickly chilled by his father. As soon as he got on board he opened the subject, but his father wouldn't hear of it: he was all for selling the brig and investing the money.

"Fighting is too risky for me," he said, "let the poor fight, the rich should keep what they have."

"But if we made four thousand pounds with the *Dolphin* we may make forty thousand with the brig."

"Yes," replied his father, "and you may lose the brig, too, and see the inside of a French prison to boot."

Jack pleaded "nothing venture, nothing have," but his father insisted that this proverb should be turned round and should read "let those venture who have nothing." Jack felt that the sharp grey eyes were inflexible; resistance was useless; he dropped the subject for the time being.

The cutter's mast had been badly injured by the shot from the brig, and as it came on to blow

harder nearing the English coast the spar had to be stayed and even then treated tenderly. The two vessels ran into Hurstpoint just before noon on the following day. The brig rounded the harbour point and dropped anchor amid cheering from the villagers who had assembled on the quay. As the tri-colour fluttered down to half-mast high, and the Union Jack opened out above it the crowd cheered again and again lustily, and swarmed along the quay to greet them.

An accident happened on board the *Dolphin* which threatened to end badly. As they ran up their Union Jack the flag halyards caught in the mainsail rigging, and Morgan sent Gibby up to the crosstrees to clear it. The moment after Gibby went aloft Chips, who was sailing the vessel, told the helmsman to put his helm down and brought the cutter into the wind. At the same moment a heavier gust came. The cutter's main mast snapped clean off where it had been injured, about three feet from the deck, and went overboard, smashing in the bulwarks and bringing all the sails down with a run. Everyone was occupied in thinking of his own safety and in getting out of the way of the falling tackle—everyone except Morgan. To Jack's astonishment his father suddenly plucked the lanyard and knife from one

of the sailors, jumped across the deck to leeward and ran along the mast in the water. Everyone stared at him, not knowing what had happened. When he got near the crosstrees he either threw himself or slipped on his face and began cutting the sail away. The next moment Gibby's head popped up through the opening with such a comic expression of fear on it that Jack could hardly help laughing. His father had already begun making his way back along the spar to the vessel. As Jack ran to the lee-bulwarks to help him on board, the crew burst into a cheer, for they saw that it was the owner's presence of mind alone that had saved Gibby's life: half a minute later and he would have been suffocated under the sail.

By this time twenty fishermen had seen that the *Dolphin* was disabled, and three or four boats were soon engaged in towing the dismasted smack to her moorings. Jack and his father, Gosport, Riding and Chips were fairly carried by the cheering crowd of fishermen and village folk to the Inn.

At the Inn they were met by Sir George Barron and a crowd of gentry who all insisted on shaking hands and congratulating Morgan and Jack. Sir George took Jack over to the carriage and presented him to Lady Barron and her daughter: Jack had a vision of a large, placid woman, who

spoke kindly to him, and a round-faced girl of ten or twelve years of age, with brown hair and sharp blue eyes.

The whole afternoon and evening passed in cheering and carousing. The Inn was thronged till midnight, but long before that every sailor who would drink had been made drunk. Captain Nugent and Lieutenant Myring, even young Barron and young Crosby were intent on treating everything in the shape of a sailor who had been out on the expedition, and the general joy and happiness were almost as exciting as the strong liquor. Jack was very glad when the bar was finally closed.

Next morning he found that his father had ricked his back when saving Gibby: he had slipped on the mast near the crosstrees and had wrenched himself rather badly. In his quiet way he admitted to a good deal of pain. Jack was alarmed to see that his face was drawn and pale. Every one recommended rest, and his wife finally carried him off upstairs and forced him to lie down on the big sofa. There Jack had a good many talks with him, but even when he got down and about again he wouldn't risk the brig in a new adventure. He preferred to sell her, he said, even if he bought a bigger cutter.

The whole summer was wasted in waiting for a purchaser who never came. But as the summer wore away and Morgan got a little stronger, he began to reconsider the matter. He couldn't help seeing that the inaction was not good for his son. He encouraged him, therefore, to take out the *Dolphin* and go for another smuggling cruise. Jack took the full complement of men: but it was impossible to get any brandy from the merchants in Bordeaux, or even to get into touch with them. In spite of the fact that the cutter was well-known on the coast she was fired upon by the forts at the mouth of the river and Jack discovered that the war had cut off the best source of the trade.

It was still possible to do some business with Boulogne and the little fishing villages in the neighbourhood like Wimereux, but the brandy was not the brandy of cognac, and the wine a poor thin product, which was well christened "petit bleu." Besides, there were few French merchant vessels to be found out of sight of safe harbour. They had almost been chased from the sea by English cruisers, and those that still dared the danger were usually under escort and couldn't be attacked by the little cutter.

A couple of such cruises resulted in nothing but in developing Jack's seamanship and the sailor-

like qualities of the crew. The smacks weren't even able to pay their way, and the next summer the elder Morgan was confronted with the choice of disbanding a large number of skilled seamen or of giving Jack his way about the brig. At first he decided to discharge the seamen and reduce expenditure, but the seamen hung about the quays, and he couldn't but see that Jack was at a loose end and up to no good.

One day Jack noticed rather a pretty girl in the Inn kitchen: she smiled at him and he spoke to her. He guessed at once that she was one of his mother's many pensioners. He ventured to ask her name, and was astonished to find she was called Gretta Knight, the sister of the half-gipsy sailor Knight, but just as open, pretty and talkative as he was hard and secretive. Jack went with her to her home one day on the edge of the downs, and found the whole family living in the direst poverty. Knight spent all the money he made on himself: the father had been dead some years and the mother was hard put to it to keep life in the four younger children by washing and doing odd jobs. Her daughter Gretta helped her, but the demand in the village for female labour was unimportant, and the whole family would probably have starved if it hadn't been for the

charity of the Inn and The Court. Lady Barron, Mrs. Knight told Jack, often helped them, and so did his mother. He got into the habit of giving his spare cash to Mrs. Knight and paying frequent visits to the cottage. One day he accompanied Gretta as she was going to the village and kissed her on the way. She was nothing loth, but Jack was brought to himself a little later by the noise of a carriage: he caught a glimpse of Lady Barron and Margaret Barron as they rolled by, the child's sharp eyes fixed on him as she passed.

Of course, Jack was seen walking with Gretta or kissing her, and soon the news was all over the village. Knight the sailor, grinned and paid no attention to it, but Jack's father took the matter more seriously. He saw that the youth would have to be employed, and as no purchaser presented himself for the brig, he began to consider the alternative which Jack had put forward. Though he did not admit it even to himself, his reluctance to fit out the brig came from the fact that he would be unable to take command of her. He hated risking a large sum of money without exercising any control over the venture. He felt in some dim way that his prudence and his knowledge of men were important factors in his con-

tinual success. But during the next winter he discussed the matter more than once with Jack, and finally in the spring called him into the Inn-parlor one day and began laying down the law to him.

"If I fit out the brig for you," he said (Jack got warm at the thought), "you must promise me two or three things. Chips will have to be the sailing Captain, the master, as they call it in a man-o'-war, and Gosport 'll have to be fighting Captain, but Gosport's too eager to fight, and I want you to promise me never to go into any fight without getting Riding's consent."

Of course, Jack promised: he would have promised anything and kept his promise, too, in order to get on board the brig and have a real chance.

As soon as the brig was ready for sea, Morgan himself came down in spite of a little lameness, which he began to think he'd never lose, and superintended the engaging of the new men. In all he signed on fifty sailors, but these were nearly all fishermen from the port and well known to him, and the new hands soon shook down with the rest of the crew.

Newton was then placed in command of the *Dolphin* with twenty men under him, and with

positive instructions not to part company with the *Warrior,* as the brig had been renamed.

The first cruise was wholly unproductive: the privateers slipped down the French coast, across the Bay, and back again, without finding anything. They discovered, incidentally, that Newton was a first-rate captain, and that the *Dolphin* could outsail the brig on or against a wind; but every French vessel they saw, and they only saw three or four, managed to scuttle into some neighbouring port before they could get on terms with her.

Finally Jack was compelled by the need of revictualling the ship to return to Hurstpoint, and he did so in a spirit of utter disappointment and dejection. To his astonishment his father was well content.

"I'm quite satisfied," he said, "half the big mistakes in the world are made through overeagerness. Don't be in a hurry, you'll come across something good yet. If good luck never lasts, bad luck never holds either."

One evening Riding came to the Inn and wanted to see Jack.

"I have just been reading in a French book," he said, "that most of the French East Indiamen come home about September or, at any rate, be-

fore the monsoon. Why shouldn't we go out at once and get South into their track? They're seldom heavily armed."

The suggestion seemed to Jack excellent. He called in his father, and his father, after a talk with Chips, approved of the proposal.

In another three days the brig and the sloop were made ready and started out on the second cruise. They ran almost due South for ten days and then began cruising about. For a week or so they saw nothing, but one day at dawn the look-out at the mast head announced a fleet coming up with the southwest trade: on the *Warrior* they soon made out a number of Indiamen under convoy of four French men-o'-war and six frigates. They hoisted French colours and stood away, but were pursued by one of the frigates. As luck would have it they lost the frigate in the night, and after tacking to windward for two or three hours to make assurance doubly sure they hove to till morning.

Before dawn Jack was awakened and hurried up on deck to make out a full rigged ship hull down on the horizon. No one knew what the ship was, but before the day had broken completely Chips and Riding had come to the conclusion that it was one of the East Indiamen,

which for some reason or other had been left behind by the main fleet, and was making her way unprotected to the nearest French port. Chips advised immediate attack and Riding, too; but strange to say Gosport was against them.

"These heavy guns," he said, "are heard a long way off, and we might have a frigate down on us just when we had got the Indiaman. Let us stop her first and see if we can't separate her a little from her protectors."

So they contented themselves with heading the Indiaman off and throwing a shot across her bow. She immediately went about and the brig followed; careful not to overtake her.

Early in the afternoon Gosport admitted that the distance between the fleet and the Indiaman was great enough, and they immediately crowded on all sail to overhaul the prey. At four o'clock in the afternoon they beat to quarters and got everything ready for the fight: the big ship was about half a mile away to leeward when Gosport and Eldridge fired the big sixty-eight pounder at her. She replied with broadside guns which seemed to be twelve and eighteen pound carronades and did no damage. The brig's guns were all directed at the Indiaman's rigging and masts, and in a short time the jaw of the spanker boom

was shot away, which brought the sail and spars in heaped confusion to the deck. The big ship was now practically at the mercy of the brig as a whale would be at the mercy of a swordfish. Again and again the big gun and the thirty-two pounders, too, raked her decks. In half an hour she struck her flag, and Jack and Riding went on board to take possession. They found their first supposition correct: she was from Pondicherry, carried a hundred men, with an equipment of six eighteen-pound carronades and six twelve-pounders, and thought herself almost above capture by anything smaller than a frigate: over-confidence had brought them to grief, though they had lost only half a dozen men.

As usual Jack divided the crew: he took Riding and Chips with him on board the Indiaman and about thirty men, and sent half the Indiaman's crew on board the brig as prisoners. After repairing the damage the three vessels set sail in company northward.

Jack and Riding had not gone through the cargo, but they soon discovered enough to be sure that their prize was a very rich one, and they resolved to keep well out of the way of vessels, far to the west of the track, indeed, in the open ocean in order to avoid any chance of recapture. In a

fortnight Jack brought his prize into Hurstpoint harbour almost without difficulty. He anticipated a great reception, and he got it. But he soon realized that his success had been too great and too rapid for his friends' affection: in reality he was the object rather of envy than of admiration. True, everyone met him with mouth-praise and congratulations, but Jack saw plainly enough that it was lip-service, for the most part, and that not only his acquaintances but the gentry of the neighbourhood envied him his good luck. For a day or two he was too excited to pay much attention to what others thought or felt; it was his sister who first convinced him that his good fortune had cost him the good-will of his fellows. He met her one day walking with young Barron, and taking his own experience with Gretta Knight as a guide, he tried to warn her.

"Young Barron was always flighty at school," he said, "and underneath his pleasant manners he's mad with family pride."

His sister looked at him: "It's true, then," she said quietly.

"What's true?" asked Jack. "What do you mean?"

"What everyone's saying," she retorted, "that your head's turned with conceit. You think be-

cause Gosport took the French ship that you're a great person: but you had no more to do with it than I had, and that's not much."

Jack was flabbergasted by the attack. Instead of saying to himself that his sister was angry because his warning confirmed her own secret and painful doubts, and kissing her into good humour he just felt puzzled; but his good sense helped him a little.

"I only told you what I think, for your own good," he remarked, "a man knows things about another man that a girl doesn't know."

"It's a pity Gretta Knight didn't teach you to mind your own business," she replied angrily.

Jack shrugged his shoulders and went his way, but on reflection he realized that his sister's opinion, unpleasant as it was, was probably the opinion of the neighbourhood.

They found the Indiaman was filled to the hatches with rich Indian goods, and Jack's father determined to go to London by coach to find out how best to sell them. Meanwhile Jack and Riding were to bring the big ship quietly up the Thames.

It was Jack's first visit to London. But he was not overwhelmed or dazzled by the novel sights and sounds of the great city. His only standard

of measure was Bordeaux, but Bordeaux, when he knew it, was boiling, so to speak, and though London was twenty times as big, it was far quieter, far more commonplace than Bordeaux, dirtier, too, and more sordid. True there was energy of a physical sort on the quay-side: hard work and long hours, a rude zest of living, too, in roaring gin shops and public houses, such as he had never seen in France: but that side of life rather repelled him. The seamen all hung about the docks and low drinking dens: Riding even never wandered far from the river, but Jack was filled with insatiable curiosity, and was eager to see all there was to be seen and draw his own conclusions without interruption. He made excursions by himself, and the river scenes soon failed to satisfy him.

The city itself and the business part seemed dull and grimy; but the west-end drew him again and again. The pride and comfort of the aristocratic quarters, the life of luxury and fashion; the show and elegance of it all appealed to him now as irresistibly as young Barron's courtesies and high manner had appealed to him years before.

He was curious of dress and custom. The very rich people about the Court, he noticed, had all

discarded the voluminous garments which still obtained in the country. The exquisites in St. James's set him staring: the men no longer wore powder in their hair, they were dressed in tights with little bows above the ankles. Their huge cravats and zebra vests made all of a piece and fitting like an eelskin impressed him in spite of himself. Their canes, too, and broad brimmed hats, and, above all, their assured carriage, made him ashamed of his rough seaman's clothes.

The fashionable women turned his envy to admiration; they were even more curiously attired than the men: they wore turbans of muslin wrapped round the head, with two or three enormous feathers, which seemed to add to their height and slimness. The headdress was often built up with straw, but this did not lessen the effect in Jack's eyes: their breasts were bare and were allowed to protrude naked from the dress, which was usually very loose and very light, with only thin petticoats underneath: he could see their legs quite plainly. Many beauties even moistened their dresses in order to make them cling and show off their forms. The boldness of the fashion, the appeal of it set Jack's senses rioting: the best class, he saw, was far more natural, more frankly sensual, than the middle-class. In young

and pretty women and girls the fashion seemed admirable to him; when the wearers were old and ugly, he thought it hideous.

He was hugely amused by a verse he saw in a shop window under the caricature of a lady who had lost her waist through refusing to eat:

"Folly and fashion do prevail
To such extremes among the fair,
A woman's only top and tail,
The body's banish'd: God knows where!"

But none of the fashionable ladies or gentlemen ever cast more than a contemptuous glance at the rough sailor, and a little piqued perhaps, by their indifference, Jack noticed that the best of them were less polite in London than in Bordeaux; even in St. James's the gentlemen took the wall of the ladies continually, which was never seen on the other side of the Channel. On the whole, Jack's English pride was rather starved than strengthened by his first visit to London, though the wealth shown in fine carriages and shops, and the beautiful women in the parks, impressed him in spite of himself.

It was near Charing Cross that he saw in a bookseller's window the first mention of a name which was afterwards to become familiar to him

and to the world—the name of Buonaparte: under a picture of a guillotine "the conqueror of Italy" was represented in the guise of Pompey, setting out to destroy the nest of English pirates; the print made the youth flush with anger.

A couple of days later his father explained that he had sold the cargo of the ship for thirty thousand pounds, and that he thought he could get twenty more for the ship itself.

"But you'll fit her out as a privateer, won't you?" cried Jack.

His father stared at him, and then laughed shortly.

"I'm not quite mad, if you are; we've had rare good luck, and not to be content with it would show we were fools. We've made as much in three years of war as I have made in thirty years of work, and I won't risk it for anybody. What I wanted to tell you was this: I propose to divide the money equally between us and put your share aside for you. You will be twenty-one next year and I think you deserve it, and it will steady you to have it. But I want you to promise me you will only spend the interest of it.

"Aren't you going to give anything to Gosport Riding and the rest?" asked Jack.

"Why should we?" asked his father. "W

didn't promise them anything, besides I want to put away the round sum of twenty-five thousand pounds for each of us. With that you'll be the equal of any one in the village: you may have another successful cruise in the brig; but in any case twenty-five thousand pounds sets you above want and care, makes a gentleman of you, and that's good enough for a youth of twenty-one. I intend to invest the money in the Funds: at the present price I'm told it'll bring in just seven per cent., and with five pounds a day coming in you can ruffle it with the best. You know French, too, and I don't see why you shouldn't marry some lady and be as good as the Barrons or anyone else."

"The Barrons?" cried Jack in utter astonishment.

"Yes, the Barrons," said his father, looking at him out of cunning grey eyes, "I have lent a good bit of money in mortgage on The Court and may lend more. You do as I tell you and we'll see strange things yet."

A few days afterwards his father came down rubbing his hands. He had sold the ship for twenty-six thousand pounds without including the plate. Again Jack pressed him to give the six thousand, at any rate, which he hadn't expected

to the officers and crew: but his father shook him off roughly, said he was silly. At length Jack retorted:

"Let me give my share of it."

Ultimately his father consented to give five hundred pounds each to Riding, Gosport and Chips, and twenty-five pounds apiece to the crew. The men cheered at the news, and the officers appeared to be very grateful. But Jack had no difficulty in seeing that Riding was the only person who really appreciated the liberality:

"The suggestion didn't come from the old man," he said to Jack, "but from you, eh? The richer a man gets the meaner he gets as a rule, and your father, with all his good qualities, has never liked parting. Those who have a hard time in youth seldom do," he went on. "Before your father married the Irishman's daughter and got the *Robin Hood* he had had a very hard time for many a year, and it has left its mark on him."

And then, afraid of hurting the youth, he added: "Most rich men are like Admiral Jervis; I saw a caricature of him the other day called 'The Lion's Share': there was all the prize money on the table and Jervis was saying: 'The first share's mine because I caught the prey, the

second falls to me because I'm the King of Beasts, and if anyone presumes to touch the third——! !" and he roared with amusement.

"Was it mother who owned the Inn?" cried Jack; "was that the way father got his start?"

"I thought you knew," said Riding, "or I wouldn't have said anything."

"Tell me more," insisted Jack, extremely curious to get this glimpse of his father as seen through another's eyes.

"He was a sailor," said Riding, "who had come round to Hurstpoint in a coaster from Wales, from Haverford West, I believe. He and the innkeeper's daughter fell in love with each other, I was told, and that's how he got the *Robin Hood*. But it wasn't the place then it is now," he went on. "Give him his due; he's done a great deal for it, and instead of taking it easy as he got richer, he worked harder. The old man's very clever. I wish you'd tell me how he's going to invest his money, because I'd like to invest mine in the same way."

"He's putting all his and mine in the Funds," said Jack, "and I'm going to-morrow or the next day to the Bank of England," he added a little vaingloriously, "to inscribe my name. Father

says that at the present price it'll bring in more than seven per cent."

"Ho! Ho!" Riding laughed, "that's better than I thought. I'll tell Chips and Gosport, too, and we'll all do the same thing. Thirty-five pounds a year for life is fourteen shillings a week, and that's double what the farm labourers have to live on, and double what the ordinary sailor gets. A man who can't live comfortably on fourteen shillings a week's a fool."

To his astonishment Jack saw that what they regarded as an assured competence altered their manners and had some effect on the very nature of Gosport and Chips, and even on Riding himself. It gave them a certain confidence that Jack had not known in them before, and he began to realize for the first time that if five hundred pounds could so transform a man like Riding twenty-five thousand pounds must have an infinitely greater effect on his own position: but he had no means yet of gauging its influence, and youth-like he put it out of his head for the time.

When they got back to Hurstpoint again they did nothing much for the rest of the year and heard little or nothing except wild stories of how England was to be invaded by French soldiers on gigantic rafts. As sailors they paid little atten-

tion to such silly vaporings: they knew quite well that a revenue cutter could deal with a good many such rafts, and they didn't believe that their adversaries were quite insane. But the threats of invasion were cunningly used by the Government to increase the war-like spirit of the people and to win acceptance for Pitt's new taxes. The English governing classes have always been in favour of increasing the army and navy, and thus providing their poorer members with profitable posts. Nowhere is patriotism made to pay so well.

In the next summer Jack made several trips and met with several minor successes. In bad weather he captured two coasters off Brest which more than paid the expenses of the year. Encouraged by these successes he resolved on the last cruise of the year in September to make a real effort. He jogged down the French coast from Dunkirk almost to St. Malo without seeing anything and then he was chased by an English seventy-four. Jack had no wish to be held up by such a ship. He knew that he would not only have a very unpleasant hour's cross-questioning but that probably thirty or forty of his men would be "pressed" to serve the king, and all he could do would be to complain.

The English ship had come from windward

bringing with her a strong westerly breeze, and Jack saw at once that the two vessels would have to separate in order to stand a chance of escape. Unluckily for him as it turned out Chips had gone on board the little *Dolphin* to explain to Newton a series of night signals which had been agreed on.

The Warrior now signalled the cutter to escape as best she could and get back home, and as the cutter bore up one way the brig started off on the other tack and attempted to get to windward of the big ship. But as luck would have it the cutter took the easier way and the British battleship was enabled by her superior position to edge away and so almost make up for the superior sailing qualities of the brig.

The chase went on the whole morning and it wasn't till late on a windy afternoon that Jack was able to weather his stubborn countryman. Gosport had been anxious all the afternoon to have a shot at her with the sixty-eight pounder, declaring that it would be quite easy to bring some of her spars down and give her a lesson. Neither Jack nor Riding would hear of this: they were quite content to shake off their pursuer. The worst of it was that when the man-o'-war left off chasing them and took her way to the

nor'ward she had driven the brig far down the coast to the very centre of the French naval power. To get out of danger Jack had to beat to windward in the teeth of a strong breeze, and that took some time and involved a good deal of hard unpleasant work. Still Jack did what he thought wise and the whole night was spent in beating to windward in order to gain a decent offing.

Day dawned on a wild scene with scurrying grey clouds chasing each other to the East. The sea was running high and the wind blew with such force that it cut off the crests of the waves and the spindrift drenched everyone. The brig was under light canvas, the plain sails even being reefed. Suddenly the lookout hailed the deck with the news that a three-master could be seen right in the wind's eye: "all hands and idlers" were immediately ordered on deck and the little brig proceeded to set more canvas.

In an hour they made out that the newcomer was a French frigate and one of the fastest of her class, for in an hour more they could see part of her line of ports. There was nothing for it but to run without appearing to run, and so Jack kept the brig away and let her go free. But the Frenchman had caught sight of them and wanted a closer acquaintance, so he altered his

course too and shook out his royals, and as the devil would have it at the critical moment the wind veered a couple of points and gave a further advantage in the game to the big ship that now ran up the tricolour and signalled to the *Warrior* to heave to. Nothing was further from Jack's mind. He crowded on every rag of canvas the brig would stand and did his best to get away. But the wind freshened continually and running free with nearly a gale of wind under her stern the brig was not as fast as the larger vessel. The whole day too was before them and Jack knew that the French coast couldn't be more than thirty-five or forty miles away; that English man-o'-war had put them in a trap.

Things began to look awkward and Riding could only suggest more sail. Gosport insisted that they should let him use the big gun as soon as he had a chance, and as the French man-o'-war was steadily coming closer Jack consented. Up to this time he had hoped that the frigate might think them too insignificant to pursue with much obstinacy.

The contest now became interesting. The first shot with the sixty-eight fell a little short, but it evidently provoked the Frenchman, for he put his helm down and as his ship yawed he let fly

his whole broadside. None of his guns, however, carried as far as Jack's and the shots all fell harmlessly into the sea while the manœuvre nearly doubled the distance between the ships.

Towards four o'clock in the afternoon, however, the Frenchman had crawled up to them again, and again and again Gosport fired the sixty-eight but for some time without result. When the French ship had got within a third of a mile, however, one of Gosport's shots did a good deal of damage, for it shot away the foretopmast of the pursuer; brought down the sails in a wreck and diminished the Frenchman's speed. In anger as it appeared he again put his helm down and let fly a whole broadside. As bad luck would have it one of the shots killed two or three of the *Warrior's* men and another struck the to'gallant mast and brought the spar down on the deck with a run. Before an order could be given, the men had sprung aloft to cut away the wreck, but by the time they got it all clear and the brig moving properly she had hardly regained her former distance from the French ship. Jack began to long for darkness, but unluckily there were still two or three hours of daylight. Once again the French ship favoured by the weather gage began to draw up foot by foot and when only a

quarter of a mile away she put her helm down and gave them another broadside aimed wholly at the rigging.

Luckily for them the shots did no particular damage and as the Frenchman lost nearly half a mile by the manœuvre Jack began to hope that the worst was passed, when suddenly the watch on the fo'castle sang out that there was a sail on the lee-bow. The glasses showed that it was a French man-o'-war probably called out of Cherbourg by the firing, for almost as soon as she was sighted their big pursuer fired a gun to attract her attention and then began to signal to her. Jack immediately called Gosport and Riding to council.

"What are we to do?" he asked.

Neither of them could make any suggestion.

The land now was plainly visible a few miles to leeward. The uncomfortable fear that they might be captured presented itself to Jack; but he could not realise it; he would go on struggling to the end, he resolved. Of a sudden he saw that there was no possibility of escape by holding on; but just a bare chance if he went about and tacked to windward, daring meanwhile the worst that the French frigate could do.

Hurriedly he put his plan before Gosport and Riding.

"She'll sink us," cried Riding.

"We'll be lucky, if she doesn't kill half of us," said Gosport.

"There is nothing else to be done," cried Jack. "Propose anything; I'm ready to try whatever you like; but in another half an hour we'll be ashore. We're lost already if we go on; this gives us a bare chance." Seeing that they hesitated, he cried: "Ready about, put the helm down," and in a moment the brig lurched up into the wind. The daring brought its own reward. Not understanding what the brig was up to and his guns being charged the French Captain gave orders to fire. The brig being head on offered a smaller mark and only a couple of the shots did any damage at all. Close hauled with the sails as flat as a board the brig drove towards the enemy; it looked as if the manœuvre were about to succeed, for once past the frigate it was odds that the brig close hauled was a better sailor than the larger vessel. Just as they came opposite the frigate Gosport seized the opportunity of firing every gun he could into her. The French captain, completely astonished at what had happened, did

the worst thing he could do; he was preparing to go about and still follow the brig while keeping the weather gage; but the attack was so sudden and the damage done so great, for the sixty-eight pounder killed half a dozen men and swept the deck, that he let the frigate fall off again and gave the brig as she passed his whole broadside. But luck happened to be with him; one of his shots brought down a block which caught Jack on the head and shoulders and relieved him for the time being of any anxiety as to the future. Worse still a couple of the shots caught the brig's foremast and carried it away while three or four more plunged right through her. Her flag was still defiantly flying at the mainmast-head, and so the Frenchman loaded as quickly as possible and when within a hundred yards gave her another broadside. Then too late the *Warrior's* men thought of the flag, but before they could pull it down it was plain that the little brig was sinking. The French Captain saw that too and sent his boats to take the crew off. They had difficulty enough in saving the men, for it was already dark and the brig with her deck awash looked as if she might founder at any moment. They brought most of the crew away, however, and showed a

good deal of kindness to Jack, who was carried on board the French frigate insensible by Val Joyce and Weetman.

A little later only the masts of the brig stuck out above the water; a few minutes later still and they had disappeared.

CHAPTER VII

IT was many weeks before Jack heard what happened after his fall; the heavy block had fractured his skull and, the subsequent moving and inadequate attendance bringing on a sort of brain fever, he lay for weeks in almost complete unconsciousness.

When the *Warriors* found themselves penned together in the forehold of the *Liberté,* as the frigate was called, they could only count forty-five men saved of eighty-one, and of the officers Riding was missing. But sailors bear mishaps like gamblers who live by the freaks of fortune, and as they were given blankets and food and the wounded attended to by the doctor they soon consoled themselves with the reflection that they might have been worse off. They knew that the frigate anchored in the early morning in calm water, and by that sort of second sense which sailors possess they felt pretty sure that they had run into Cherbourg through the Eastern Channel and were now ensconced under the lee

of the breakwater. They were brought up on deck next day for exercise and fresh air, and Gosport, who knew the place, told them that the island to the west was called Ile Pelée, and pointed out the forts not only on the islands in the harbour but on the heights surrounding the town. As soon as the French officers found out that he knew a little French they began asking him questions, and in the hope of being kept less strictly he declared that Jack was the Captain and owner's son and gave himself out as merely the sailing master. He told the Frenchmen too that their cruise had been fruitless and ascribed their unfortunate position to the pursuit of the English battleship. At first he couldn't make them understand why an English privateer should avoid an English man-o'-war, and when he explained to them roughly the system of pressgangs they broke into exclamations of astonishment, and went away evidently impressed with the idea that only savages or madmen would try to make men fight against their will. They asked Gosport whether he would have fought if he had been pressed in that way and he confounded them with the reply that he supposed he would; it was "all in the day's work." None of them seemed able to credit the fact that pressed men would fight

as bravely as those who go into battle of their own free will and animated by patriotic ardour.

In forty-eight hours the necessary formalities were fulfilled and Gosport and Jack and their companions were taken on shore and lodged in the prison. Jack from the beginning was treated better than the rest; he was received into the Governor's own house and his wound was dressed at once by the prison doctor.

When he first came to himself he felt astonishingly languid but clear-headed and very curious. The first glance showed him he was in prison; there were bars on the small square window set high up in the wall, a window which framed a patch of blue sky the colour of a pigeon's egg but bright as if newly washed. The walls were a gravy brown; the door opposite his feet could be only a prison door, he thought; it looked so dark and massive; there was a stool in the cell, a little table at the head of his bed; and a washing-stand in the corner with a mere bowl on it which Jack couldn't believe was meant for a basin. But the bed was comfortable; the linen though coarse spotlessly clean; he stretched his toes out against its coolness with pleasure. He was puzzled by what seemed to him the great weight of the bed-clothes; it was a real effort to lift his feet and

yet he wasn't too warm; it was surprising. When he tried to turn to look at the wall behind him he found the explanation of the mystery; it took a prodigious effort even to turn in the bed, an effort that left him breathless. He must be very weak, he decided. Suddenly he caught a glimpse of his left hand; he was astounded it was so thin and pale, and he felt it an effort to hold it up; he was relieved to lay it out flat on the bed so as to rest all of it down to the very fingertips.

What had made him so weak? he mused to himself, and musing slept. . . .

When he came to himself two men were in the cell, one arranging some soup for him on the little table, the other with a lantern in his hand directing. The man with the lantern was in officer's uniform, he said:

"Lift him up and feed him."

The odour of the cabbage soup had already spread through the room and brought the water to Jack's mouth; he felt very hungry. When he was lifted up and given the first mouthful he said "merci Monsieur" with a smile.

"Oh, you speak French," cried the officer to him. "That's good. Now you've come to yourself, you'll soon get well."

Jack was astonished by his harsh peculiar accent and quick abrupt ways. He noticed that the officer was a small man, slight and very dark, with a skin like mahogany, a heavy black moustache, black eyes and long thin pointed nose—a nose longer even than his father's and more prominent, self-assertive. But the face was very intelligent and vivacious with a sort of instinct of rough kindness in it; and Jack felt kindly too for the good soup seemed to course all through his body and warmed him as if he had been hollow all down his legs.

"I have been ill some time, haven't I, Monsieur?" he asked at length.

"You have been here over a fortnight; but now Doctor Sauvan says you have turned the corner—not that I think much of what he says—a republican and revolutionary at this time of day! But by the way you suck up that soup I think you'll be about soon. Take a drink of the wine too; it has no body in it; these Northern wines are all thin, it takes sunshine to make good hot juices in plant or in man; but still it'll do you good."

Jack too thought it did him good; though he would have preferred more of the soup. The little officer divined his desire and asked him if

he would like some more soup and when he said "Yes" sent for it at once.

"You've had a bad bash on the head," he continued, "but it's healed now and the doctor says you mustn't have any meat, but I'll try you with a little to-morrow. I know how quickly one recovers from wounds; I have had seventeen myself."

"Seventeen?" cried Jack, staring at him.

"In three campaigns," he added. "But I must not talk so much; that wiseacre of a doctor'll say I tired you. Now drink your soup," he went on as it came in, "then have a sleep, and to-morrow we'll put something to chew between your grinders."

A few minutes afterwards with "Bon soir, Monsieur," and "Bon soir, Monsieur," in reply Jack was left to sleep. At first Jack couldn't help thinking of his jailor's courtesy and kindness; fancy saying "Bon soir, Monsieur" to a prisoner and giving him a second helping of soup and pressing the wine upon him. Jack promised himself to find out more about his extraordinary jailor next day and particularly about his three campaigns and seventeen wounds, seventeen—— and so wondering he fell asleep.

The Governor's kindness was not wholly dis-

interested. Privateers' men were regarded as little better than pirates and were apt to be roughly handled, but Gosport knew that they would all be better treated if some money passed and therefore he gave Jack out for a person of great wealth and importance. He assured the Governor that whatever was spent on him would be largely repaid and he had already written to Jack's father in England telling him of Jack's wound and need of nursing and praying for a large remittance. The post between the two countries was more than primitive, but this letter reached Hurstpoint safely and Jack's father used his smuggling correspondent in Boulogne to transmit a couple of hundred pounds to Jack at Cherbourg. It is true the money had not yet arrived when Jack awoke to consciousness, but Gosport's assurances were so confident that the Governor's native kindness was sustained by the hope of profit.

The impressions of Jack's first conscious talk with the Governor were only strengthened and deepened in the days to come. He soon found out that the little man's name was Caressa—Achille Caressa—and he couldn't help smiling when he first heard it, for he had always thought of Achilles as a great fighter and giant, whereas

Achille Caressa looked to him at first anything but formidable. But when he got him talking about his campaigns he soon began to feel a certain respect for him which gradually deepened into a half-reluctant admiration. He found that Caressa was a native of Nice and had served in the French army from his twenty-third year; he might now be about forty.

One afternoon when sitting in a funny little room downstairs Jack learned with amazement that Caressa had fought his way from the ranks to Colonel of Chasseurs in three years, that his thigh bone had been broken by a shot at Arcola and that the post of governor of the prison had been given him by Bonaparte as a reward of valour and compensation for his lameness. Jack was astounded to find that Colonel Caressa was an idolator of Bonaparte; the Corsican was his deity, his only religion, indeed, and he held the faith fanatically. At the mere mention of Bonaparte's name his voice used to change.

He was already lieutenant when Bonaparte at twenty-five was sent as Brigadier-General to the Army of Italy to command the artillery.

"None of us knew much about him," Caressa told Jack one day, "except that he had done big things at Toulon, but for one reason or another

we all hoped he would break the sort of spell of defeat that bound us. From the moment he came no soldier with brains in his head talked or thought of anyone else. How well I remember the first time I saw him. I was sent to his quarters with a message from the General-in-Chief Dumerbion; Dumerbion was a good honest old slow-coach without a trace of ability. But I was glad to take his message to General Bonaparte, for I wanted to see the new man of whom they talked so much. As soon as I got to his quarters on the Quai du Midi I was struck by the quick eagerness of everyone, by a sort of strained anxiety on every face, anxiety that would have been fear if it hadn't also been enthusiasm. The officers at the door were not chatting and smoking as in the quarters I had just left; but all on the *qui vive,* silent, alert; upstairs the little antechamber was crowded; yet no one was sitting down, no one speaking.

"In a moment my name was taken to the general; in a moment more I was told to go in. Face to face with him I was dumfounded; he was so small—smaller than I, very thin, very weak-looking, with a saffron-yellow face; but his eyes were extraordinary—searching, imperious, enigmatic.

" 'Eh bien?' he barked as I didn't speak.

" 'Dumerbion invites you, mon Général, to come to his quarters,' I spluttered out; all my senses taken by his peculiar appearance.

" 'Qui donc?' he asked. His 'Qui donc' 'Who Sir' recalled me to myself.

" 'General Dumerbion,' I corrected myself.

" 'Return,' he said, 'tell the *General-in-Chief* I will wait on him immediately!' There was reproof in his formal correction.

"I went through the room and down the stairs three at a time and galloped to the General-in-Chief's quarters as if my life hung on every second. 'Why?'

"I can't tell you, except that that was the spirit Bonaparte brought into everyone. I had scarcely given my message to Dumerbion when I met Bonaparte coming up the stairs; there was a flash of recognition in his eyes as he passed me that made my heart beat as if I had been a child, yet I was far older than he. What would you? The devil is in the fellow."

"But is he really great?" asked Jack.

"Really great!" Caressa laughed scornfully. "Oh yes, my friend; really great—look what he did. In 1792 we were badly beaten by a handful of Germans under the orders of General Beaulieu —the very General whom Bonaparte afterwards

beat as if he had been dough. Think of it? There we were in February, '94, stuck in Nice opposite the almost impregnable position of Saorgio where Masséna had been stopped, and Masséna was a great general. Everyone regarded Saorgio as impregnable. Masséna even had said that it couldn't be taken without better equipment and more men. There it was, a strong position, guarded on one side by the Alps; on the other side by the sea and in the Port of Oneglia the English vessels, the allies of the Piedmontese and the Austrians. Then think of our army. I was an officer—a lieutenant; but the only pair of boots I had was a pair of espadrilles, sea-sandals you know, like the fisher-boys wear; no stockings; and only one shirt that I used to wash myself. Why I remember at our first ball in Italy we officers blacked our toes so that they shouldn't show too badly through the boots. At that time in Nice I had had no pay for nearly a year; my wife and child and myself were living on what my father and mother could spare us—semi-starvation! No wonder we were all down in the mouth and grumbling.

"Then Bonaparte came and changed everything and everybody.

"A great man, you ask—yes, indeed. In a

week he proposed a new plan of campaign which was adopted by the Council of War. The Council was made up of young Robespierre and Ricord, the representatives of the people, and of the Generals Dumerbion, Masséna and Rusca. Bonaparte had only young Robespierre on his side and his own impetuous, imperious genius; but his plan was adopted and on the morning of the 6th April we started out.

"On the 8th of April we took the heights that dominated Oneglia; within a month we had captured Saorgio and won the Col di Tende, established communications with the army of the Alps and opened a broad road into Italy. In a month without any change except the one man the mob of beaten beggars had captured two strong places —Oneglia and Saorgio—taken four thousand prisoners, five flags and seven pieces of cannon. No wonder Dumerbion in his despatch to the government wrote that our victories were owing solely to 'the talent of General Bonaparte and his wise plans.'

"A great man—yes, my friend. And if the generals of the Army of the Alps hadn't been jealous of him but united with him, as he proposed, we should have swept Italy of the Austrians two years before we did. And how they rewarded

him when Robespierre fell, sent him to prison—la canaille—ah!" and the little Colonel's eyes glowed like live coals. "But I could talk to you all day about him; I mustn't; I don't want to excite you or the doctor'll pull a face."

Colonel Caressa was called away by a row among the prisoners. The English sailors were allowed to walk about for a couple of hours in the middle of the day in the courtyard and they often had fights among themselves, which the French jailors watched with wonder. When any of the other prisoners wanted to complain or thought himself badly treated he made a row and so there was generally a certain excitement and noise which seemed to Jack astonishing. A jailor would dispute volubly with a prisoner for ten minutes and then go away muttering while the prisoner screamed new arguments after him. At first Jack thought the want of discipline comic, but he soon found it had a human side to it.

Jack had already noticed that the Governor and doctor were not very good friends; no two men indeed could be more unlike than fiery, kind little Caressa and Doctor Sauvan. The doctor was a thin tall man of about fifty with a head running up to a point at the back, which with its close cropped grey hair reminded one ludicrously of a

snow-capped mountain peak. Otherwise his face was remarkable chiefly for a pair of patient brown eyes and a long bony jaw. He may have been a republican and revolutionary as Caressa said, but he didn't talk much about his political opinions; the Reign of Terror which he had lived through in Paris had made him cautious. He always thought before he spoke and when in doubt or meditation, he had a trick of sucking his upper lip into his mouth which was unaffectedly characteristic. He was a master of his trade and inspired Jack with a certain confidence as a well-read and capable man. As soon as the ice was broken between them Jack noticed that he was naturally argumentative and talked a much purer and more bookish French than Caressa, but Jack preferred the little Governor's short phrases and vivid expressions.

In one of his early talks with Jack, Doctor Sauvan expressed himself astonished by the quickness with which he was regaining strength.

"Immense vitality you have," he said. "Are your father and mother young?"

"I'm the eldest boy," Jack replied. "My father was about thirty when he married and my mother about twenty."

"I only ask," interjected the Doctor, "because

I have a theory that a young father and mother give greater physical energy to the offspring. General Bonaparte whom Colonel Caressa is always talking about, the Italian condottiere, was born, I believe, of a mother who was under sixteen. I am astonished to find too," Dr. Sauvan went on, "that your head is long; I expected an English head to be round like German heads. Have you any Celtic blood in you?"

Although Jack heard the word Celtic for the first time he divined its meaning.

"I suppose," he replied, "you would call me pure Celt; my father was Welsh and my mother Irish."

"That is just what I had imagined," cried the doctor, evidently greatly pleased. "You have all the characteristic traits of the Celtic race; you are like our Bretons, long bodied, short legged; very broad and strong."

He seemed to like Jack the better because the youth happened to be a good example of one of his pet theories. He was peculiarly logical, reflective and reasonable; an absolute contrast to the little Colonel, as slow of blood and quiet as the Governor was passionate and explosive. For some reason or other he inspired Jack with more confidence than did Caressa; but sooner or later

the youth was sure to find out that the irritable, passionate Colonel had the better heart and a more generous nature.

As soon as Jack began to go about the Colonel told him that he would accept his parole not to escape, and when Jack asked him exactly what that implied, he said: "It is a privilege granted to officers. If you give your word of honour not to escape and to come back to your cell every night before nine o'clock, I'll give you a key and you'll be free to go about in the day time. I have to answer for your appearance if the Government wants you; but I've no wish to make your detention painful. . . ."

Before giving his parole Jack wanted to see Gosport and Colonel Caressa made no difficulty in allowing a meeting. Gosport advised him to give his word and to get the freedom.

"There is small chance of escape," he said, "unless you know French like a native, for there is a great deal of hatred of the English, and if you got out of the prison everybody would give you up. Besides, if I were you, I'd get in with Colonel Caressa, who seems a good little fellow. I am told he has a great deal of influence with this Bonaparte and he might get you exchanged

pretty easily. At any rate that's how I'd try to work it if I were you."

Jack questioned him about the others and was desperately sorry to hear that Riding was missing. Gosport would have it that he was not drowned.

"I saw him just before we were taken off," he said, "and he was certainly not injured then. I think you'll find he got to shore."

"But the brig went down at once, didn't she?" questioned Jack.

"No, no," replied Gosport. "Her decks were awash, but she was still afloat when we got to the frigate. Riding and Knight were together at the companion-hatch and I reckon that they floated it off when the brig sunk and tried to make their way to shore on it. But we'll soon hear."

Jack questioned him further about the prison food and treatment. The food Gosport thought good and the treatment surprisingly lenient and kindly. But the want of discipline in the prison struck him even more than it had struck Jack. Still he was fairly content and full of hope that he might be exchanged quite soon. As he said: "We have captured ten French sailors for every Englishman they've got, so the exchange ought to be easy." He little knew how difficult it was to bring about any agreement between the two governments.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER about a month of prison Jack received his first remittance from his father with a long letter telling him to ask for an exchange because his mother was broken hearted at the idea of his being in prison and was taking his absence sadly to heart. His father warned him to be careful with his money, for it might be difficult to get it to him regularly; at the same time adding that if money would help to free him he could have an advance up to a considerable sum. The end of the letter frightened Jack a little; his father again said that his mother was weak and ailing. Jack wrote to her at once to cheer her up, and at the same time to his father, thanking him for the money; he was really well treated he said, and was learning French, and had completely recovered from the crack on the head; they must think of him as quite happy. He begged his father to tell him whether Riding or Knight had got home?

He made up his mind not to ask Colonel Caressa for any account, but simply to give him

fifty pounds a quarter; and knowing the Colonel's vanity he thought he would write him a letter thanking him and enclosing the money. This he did and thereby completed his conquest of the little Colonel.

After having promised not to escape himself nor to help any of the other prisoners to get away Jack was given the run of the prison; and as soon as he was strong enough to go about he was allowed to go out for walks almost freely. For some time he didn't use this privilege much, for the lower class townsfolk and especially the sailors from French men-o'-war were exceedingly bitter against the English, and Jack was recognised as an Englishman as soon as he opened his mouth. Accordingly he kept a good deal to the prison; and in the prison the only persons always free to talk to him were the doctor and Colonel Caressa, for the jailers evidently disliked his spending much time with the English sailors. In fact he found that the best thing he could do was to ask formal permission and go to see Gosport and the others only in company with the Governor or doctor. For these reasons he was thrown back on the company of these two at all times and nothing could have been better for him than this companionship.

Sitting in the little parlor one day looking out on the courtyard he asked the Colonel whether the foils on the wall were real swords or not, and immediately discovered that he had got on the Colonel's pet hobby. Caressa explained to him not only the difference between the duelling sword and the ordinary sword but showed him a dozen specimens of cavalry sabres. The revolutionary sword, a heavy straight weapon with the Gallic cock as a handle in solid brass, which must have weighed a couple of pounds, took Jack's fancy especially; the artist had put all the defiance of the Marseillaise into the crowing head.

Once launched on his own theme there was no stopping Caressa. Before being made a lieutenant it appeared he had been the *maître d'armes* of his regiment and a famous swordsman. Jack showed such admiration, was so eager to hear all about his exploits that the Colonel at length offered to give him lessons. The offer was accepted with delight, and the time fixed for practice, the morning hour before the *déjeuner* and after the Colonel had dealt with the daily report of the prison. Of course for some time the Colonel was easily Jack's superior, but in four or five months, served by his quickness and strength,

the youth made the contest interesting. Caressa's lameness was of course a handicap to him and he encouraged Jack to take advantage of it. But when after five or six months Jack became really expert and his adversary's lameness began to tell against him, Caressa could not control his ill-humour; "cette sacrée cuisse" he used to mutter every time he was touched till at length Jack wished that both his legs were sound so that he should have no cause for complaint. Often and often the game terminated in a real display of ill-humour, for Jack's training had made him exceptionally quick and strong, and when the Colonel was touched twice in succession he invariably lost his temper. But still the practice went on, for the Colonel loved the game and began to see that after all his lameness was a very useful excuse. He took pleasure in developing Jack's skill and quickness to the uttermost, and before the end of the first year he had made the youth an extraordinary swordsman, trained not only with the foil, but with the cavalry sabre as well. Meanwhile too Jack had learnt all sorts of different lessons from the fiery little Colonel and the philosophic doctor besides good colloquial French. Sauvan believed in the revolution almost as devoutly as Caressa believed in Napoleon, and bit

by bit Jack came to understand that world-shaking event.

At first of course he talked in the usual English way of the horrors of the Reign of Terror and the thousands of ladies and gentlemen who were guillotined, but the doctor wouldn't have it.

"The nobles kicked up a great fuss," he said, "because two or three thousand of them were executed; they belonged to the highest class and therefore everyone listened to them; but no one says anything about the forty thousand men who starved to death in France in the winter of 1788. You talk about the fishwives of Paris, but you say nothing of the thousands and thousands of hard-working women who year after year saw their children die in infancy for want of proper food." Jack was compelled at length to realise that the selfishness of the privileged classes was the first cause of the revolution.

And when Jack brought forth the famous argument which he had heard from Captain Nugent that there was no such thing as equality in nature, and therefore it was silly to talk of equality in life, he was confronted with new and impressive arguments. Caressa admitted that absolute equality was impossible and undesirable, but he insisted that the French Revolution had brought

about a great approach towards equality, and that the natural differences between one man and another had been exaggerated and made more unjust than they were in reality by bad laws of inheritance which now in France at least had been bettered. He often gave the dress of men as an instance of what he meant.

"Before the Revolution," he said, "it was common for a noble to spend two or three hundred thousand livres on a single suit; now there is a great approach towards equality in dress and everyone is the better for it. . . .

"The belief in equality is the gospel of our time. Look how we treat prisoners and criminals to-day; formerly the criminal was looked upon as a wild beast and tortured; to-day, thanks to this doctrine of equality, the magistrates all know that they must think of him as a man—like themselves. They must consider his failings and his faults as they would their own, and so the barbarous penal laws of the past all stained in blood and defiled with cruelty are being swept away. We used to kill a man in France for stealing even out of hunger; could anything be more monstrous?"

A new light seemed to shine into Jack's mind: "I remember," he said, "reading in a paper just before I left England of a boy who had broken

a pane of glass in a shop window after sunset and stolen a spoon. He was sentenced to be hung for burglary because it was after sunset, although the shop was not even closed."

"A child?"

"A boy of thirteen," replied Jack.

"What barbarous cruelty," cried Sauvan, "cruelty that would be impossible in France and will soon be impossible in England too . . . " and he shot out his under lip over the upper one in the trick peculiar to him when thinking; a moment later he went on: "Our Revolution was not only a revolt against bad government, and the exploitation of the poor; it had its ideal striving, too."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Jack.

"Pagan civilization," Sauvan replied, "was founded on slavery; our modern civilization must be founded on universal labour. Privileged position damages the privileged; the noble in France will be better now that he has to earn his bread like other men. Labour is the first condition of life. The time will come when women too will see that it is their duty to do their share of work in the world. . . ."

Even Caressa was inclined to admit that there was some truth in the doctor's praise of the Revolution:

"I often wondered," he said, "why we beat the Austrians so easily, and I think it was because the principles of the French Revolution appealed to everyone and brought us sympathy everywhere. . . .

"All through our campaigns in Italy," he went on, "whenever we struck up the *Marseillaise* we found our enemies taking it up and singing it too; it's the hymn of human revolt!"

Sauvan added sententiously . . . "Within the next ten or twenty years the French Revolution will be regarded as the best thing that ever happened to men—the sacred charter of humanity!"

Jack was enormously interested in these talks; the points of view of the two men were so different that they worked on his mind like sunshine and rain work on the earth, forcing it to produce. He began to think for himself on all questions, and his mind grew in quickness and strength as rapidly as his body.

He had spent six or seven months in Cherbourg when the Colonel announced to him one morning that his niece Suzanne was finally leaving school and coming to live with him.

"I have seen very little of her," he said. "Her mother died long ago. Her father quite lately."

"Prison is no place for her," he said. "She's

too young, but she tells me she has learnt all that the school can teach and she wants to come home, and of course I want to have her. She's very like her mother, who died the day after Lodi —the day I was made Colonel and could hope to give her a little easier time, for my pay was doubled. Good luck often comes too late in this world. . . ."

"Perhaps I shall be in Mademoiselle's way?" said Jack, partly to divert his companion's thoughts from the sad subject and partly to know how much the routine of the house would be changed by this new inmate.

"No, no," said the Colonel, "she writes to me that she wants the little room on the first floor; it is just above yours by the way; I did it up prettily for her when I came here a couple of years ago."

A few days afterwards the girl arrived at Cherbourg in the diligence and the Governor went to meet it on the square in front of the church of La Trinité.

Jack stayed in his own room and waited. About eleven o'clock they came in and he heard a clear girl's voice chattering and laughing before she ran upstairs to her room. He could hear her walking on the floor above his head; then in a

little while she came down again and went into the tiny dining-room beside his room. He could almost feel her moving about in spite of the wall that divided them, so wrought up was he; his heart was beating, he hardly knew why. He was a little cross with himself for being excited; what was she like, he wondered?

Then came the Colonel's quick, sharp voice calling to him that *déjeuner* was ready. He went into the room and was presented to Mademoiselle Suzanne. Jack was prepared to see a girl of sixteen or seventeen, and, judging by himself at that age, he expected to find almost a child; he was presented to a young lady who bowed to him with the ease of an old acquaintance. She was about medium height and very dark, her features small and fairly regular, the face a little sharp with pointed chin, the eyes so large they looked, he thought, like prunes in milk, and masses of black hair arranged in heavy bands.

"I know you so well, Mr. Jack," she began, "from my father's letters. It is as if I had known you for months, only you are quite different from what I thought."

"Really," exclaimed Jack, taken aback by this sudden assault. His first glance had shown him that she was attractive; as he began to look at

her carefully he thought her beautiful. She looked up and caught him examining her and broke into a laugh which hardly accounted for her heightened colour.

"You're amused?" said Jack.

"My own thoughts amuse me very often," she replied, smiling.

Jack was a little resentful of her complete ease and detachment. He was annoyed, too, by the quick glance that merely seemed to touch him mockingly and he shut himself up in silence and seriousness.

"We missed our lesson, sir," he said to the Colonel, "perhaps you will give me a longer one to-morrow."

"Of course," the Colonel agreed, "we mustn't leave it off long enough to get stiff; now I'm in training again I think the half-hour sword play does my lameness good."

Jack went to his room after the lunch, his heart a-flutter wondering how he could make Suzanne like him; he wanted to make her care for him intensely; but how? Should he show her that he thought her pretty and liked her, or should he conceal it all? He determined to show nothing. His training with the sword had taught him it was easy to win if his adversary could not divine his

desire. He made up his mind to wait. To be treated lightly by a mere girl was intolerable; he would be very dignified and courteous. He succeeded in being rather gloomy and ill at ease.

Meanwhile Suzanne, too, was not at her best; she had been interested and her curiosity excited by her uncle, who was always singing young Morgan's praises in his letters. She left school and came home just to meet Jack; a flirtation with a man she decided would be a great deal more amusing than more lessons. When her uncle met her he told her how Jack had given him fifty pounds and how in his letter he had hoped that the same sum quarterly might be accepted as a fair price for his board. The generosity and courtesy and perhaps a little the money itself had had a great effect on Colonel Caressa and had a still greater effect on the girl. She came to the meeting gravely prepared to meet a hero and found Jack glancing at her half timidly, half admiringly. She couldn't help laughing gaily. He had come down from his pedestal and her coquetry told her that his conquest would be easier than she had hoped; his evident admiration flattered her deliciously.

But when he drew away and answered in monosyllables she was afraid she had hurt him in some

way; then a definite fear shook her; perhaps he didn't want to like a French girl—a Catholic? She promised herself to find out next day and to show him at least that she was no bigot. Her uncle's contempt of all religion and Dr. Sauvan's sarcasms had dried up the fount of pious enthusiasm in her which may have rendered her more eager to spend her faculty of admiration on some man. However this may be, Mademoiselle Suzanne saw she had made an impression on Jack and determined that all she had to do was to stand aloof and he would come after her. She would not meet him till next day she decided, and under the pretext of a little fatigue she kept to her room that evening.

Next morning she decided to go down to breakfast and she made the most careful toilette possible. But before breakfast she heard talking, stamping and the ring of swords outside in the courtyard and when she peeped through her blind she saw Jack and her uncle fencing as if their lives depended on each hit. She could have cried with annoyance; what silly creatures men were to go exciting themselves like that about nothing. But when the sport had continued for a quarter of an hour and some of the jailers had come to witness it she made up her mind to go down too;

perhaps that would put a stop to it; anyhow it was nearly the breakfast hour.

Some time before this the Colonel had found that one of his turnkeys named Chichet was an old soldier who plumed himself on his skill with the sword. He was at once called upon to show what he could do, and the Colonel was delighted to find that if Jack was getting a little too quick for him he was always Chichet's master. On this particular morning he gave himself the pleasure of playing umpire in a conflict between Chichet and Jack. The two had been fencing about five minutes when Mademoiselle Suzanne made her appearance as demure as possible. No one noticed her for a minute or two and her uncle even put out his hand to hold her back. She laughed aloud at the intent earnestness all the men showed in the game, but at the laugh Jack only redoubled his efforts and touched Chichet twice or thrice in quick succession.

"He is doing his best," said Mademoiselle to herself, "because I'm here." The consciousness gave her heightened colour and bright eyes—the assurance of victory.

When the swords dropped she rewarded him with "How well you fence, Mr. Jack; I had no idea anybody could be so quick."

Jack had hardly time to say "Good morning" to her when her uncle asked him for one more bout and the two began again. At first Jack intended to do his best and show that he could master the Colonel as easily as Chichet, but of a sudden he realised that the older man was playing his very best, meaning to win if possible, and he made up his mind to let him win; after all Caressa had been very kind to him and it was only natural that he should desire his niece's admiration.

Chichet stood near Mademoiselle Suzanne while the two were fencing.

"My uncle is very clever, isn't he?" she said.

"Very," replied Chichet, "but the Englishman is extraordinary."

"There!" she cried, "my uncle touched him."

"Yes," Chichet admitted, "but it is only because the Englishman is not trying; I never saw him fence so badly."

Again that tell-tale colour came into Mademoiselle Suzanne's face; he had triumphed over Chichet for her; he was sparing her uncle for her. It was already *he, he.* Something magnanimous in Jack's conduct touched her deeply: were men larger minded and nobler than women, she wondered? In her heart she decided that *he*

was. She grew a little humble in mind when she thought of all his qualities. Meanwhile Jack had been brought to good humour by his own conscious superiority at the game and by the mere fact that the girl was looking on.

When at length they stopped he turned towards her with a merry look and smile. Her eyes could not help getting entangled in his for a moment; she was extremely pretty he decided; while she cast her eyes down in a little flutter of delicious shyness; had she shown him too clearly? And so Mother Nature played her old game with the two children.

A new life began for Jack. He found himself going for walks and drives with Suzanne and her uncle; sometimes round the town and the great bay; at other times up the heights that lay behind the town to this fort or that—endless excursions. The girl seemed to have quicksilver in her veins so full of life was she and ever new projects. The truth was she was tasting all the delights of first love; watching the flower of it grow in her, tending it as only a girl-woman can tend it, thrilling again and again with the certainty that the great moment was coming nearer and nearer.

Jack in the meantime was a little exasperated—

a little puzzled. If in the carriage he touched her foot a little obviously she would draw it away with a smile or word of excuse; she always seemed to like to be with him, but she avoided any opportunity of being alone with him. He could not make her out. Now and then he got piqued by her apparent unconsciousness and showed ill-temper, but she soon laughed and chased away the clouds; no sullenness could stand long against her good temper and gay kindness. Jack began to be obsessed by her; every detail of her face and every line of her figure were imprinted in him. He could shut his eyes and see her at any moment; on this drive he had been struck by the beautiful oval of her jaw—like a peeled egg in white smooth firm outline—exquisite he decided with a thrill; on another occasion his eye had caught the outline of her hip and thigh and the hesitating curve remained with him as a symbol of beauty. Once when getting into the little carriage the horses started just as she was preparing to sit down and threw her back into her seat and Jack had a glimpse of shapely limbs which set all his pulses throbbing. At will he could close his eyes and relive any of the charming moments. Continually as she got out of the carriage or into it he touched her involuntarily. Sometimes looking at

her he felt that he must kiss her lips and then her eyes would meet his and he became ashamed of his thoughts; or else she would draw his attention to some humorous thing in the street and laughter would relieve the obsession. Day and night now she was with him.

One morning just after breakfast Chichet brought some big keys in, and as he laid them down he said: "I have been through all the dungeons, sir, and underground cells; the water is coming into Numbers eleven and twelve; they should be cleaned out."

At once Mademoiselle Suzanne seized the occasion: "Oh let us visit them; I should love to see the dungeons."

Soon they were following Chichet down steps all green and dark that wound below the cellars. Chichet went in front with a lantern and kept swinging it behind him to show the way. Jack had also one that he put carefully forward so as to guide Suzanne's little feet. She shrank back from the first cell; she would not go in, she had seen enough. The cell was about eight feet square, really a black hole lighted only by the little *guichet* or barred window fixed at the very top of the door.

When the door was thrown open:

"How terrible!" she cried, paling at the thought of living in such a place.

"These are the best," Chichet explained, "the second range down below to the North are underneath these and they have no *guichet* at all in the doors; they are black holes and from Number eleven on to the East the water's coming in and there are crowds of rats; nobody could live in them for long."

"Let us see them," said Jack, partly out of curiosity, partly with the hope that fortune might favour him and give him a minute or two alone with Suzanne. They went along the corridor and followed Chichet down some more steps. They had to take care for the stone steps were dank and slippery. Here was another row of cells; Chichet opened one of the doors; the darkness of it was appalling; it made itself felt; it was like blindness.

"Let us go in a moment," whispered Suzanne shuddering, "and close the door. I want to see what effect it has; first of all, hide the lantern, Monsieur Jack, and when we call, you will open, Monsieur Chichet, won't you?"

Jack's heart began to beat. They stepped inside the door. He held the lantern behind him

and took her arm in his. She gave a faint little cry and then said:

"Give me the lantern."

Jack gave her the lantern and she held it high above her head; her face was in half darkness, the gleam of the lantern fell on the line of her bust, strained a little by her uplifted arm; Jack couldn't resist the temptation; in a moment he had put his arms about her:

"I love you," he cried. Did she give him her lips for a moment or did their lips meet just as she was already slipping out of his arms?

"Open, Monsieur Chichet," she cried, and the door was opened and the pale light struggled in.

"No, I won't go down any more," she decided. "I must get up to the light, straight up," she commanded imperiously; again Chichet led the way and Jack followed, wondering whether he had offended her, but with the image of her as she stood in the cell printed in his very being. Without closing his eyes he could see the rounded outline of the breast and the splash of light on it and the lips above.

When they came into the courtyard they found the doctor and Colonel together, and Mademoiselle Suzanne was full of questions. Could people live in such dungeons? What sort of

people used to be sent there? Her uncle told her that people had been confined there without trial under the old *régime,* the books showed that one man had lived in number seven for five years.

"Men and women were treated worse than we would treat wild beasts," Sauvan remarked, "but the Revolution changed all that. I was astonished the other day," he went on, "to find that they didn't spend on the prisoners' food one quarter of what we spend. They murdered their victims by slow starvation while torturing them with bad air, darkness and solitude."

Jack was not in tune at the moment for political discussion. He was in a fever. He made up his mind to take the first occasion to find out whether Suzanne cared for him or not. He could not wait; he must know. All that day she seemed to avoid him or at least no occasion presented itself. But fortune favours intense desire; next morning just after breakfast Colonel Caressa was called out by Chichet to speak to a prisoner on the fourth floor who was making a row over his food. The Colonel went out hurriedly and left Suzanne and Jack standing together before the window.

Jack went nearer, meaning to speak to her, but she turned her head over her shoulder to look at

him, for he was almost behind her, and as she did so he drew her head back and began kissing her. She tried to draw away, but he hardly recognised himself; he held her tensely; he would not let her move.

"Kiss me," he cried imperiously, "you did, in the dungeon," and almost without her will, her lips gave themselves to him and her eyes as well. Again and again he kissed her, pushing back her face to see the beauty of it, then kissing her again and again hungrily.

"You do love me," she whispered, looking at him.

"You know I do."

"He is coming," she said after a moment, "he is coming," and she lifted her face up and kissed him of her own accord hurriedly.

The next moment they heard the Colonel's footsteps in the hall and started apart.

"That Chichet makes mountains out of molehills," cried the Colonel hotly.

"What was it?" said Jack.

"The soup was burnt a little, but nothing that anyone couldn't eat, so I told the fellow if he didn't like it he could go without and he quickly made up his mind to enjoy what he could get."

Jack and Suzanne caught themselves smiling deliciously; for a moment their eyes had met; each understood what the other was thinking; they, too, had enjoyed what they could get.

CHAPTER IX

THEN began for Jack and for Suzanne a series of unforgettable experiences; they were like two highly sensitised plates on which the slightest variation of light and shade, of warmth or cold left deep impressions. There were continual scenes between them. In fact, there was such tension in the strings that the slightest touch rang in music or shrilled in discord.

One day Jack came in quickly and found Suzanne talking at the door of the parlour to a *sous-officier* named Lairolle; he had never noticed the fellow before, but now he saw that Lairolle was very attractive in an animal full-blooded way, a big fellow with good features, long fair moustaches and large brown eyes alight with life and vigour.

Suzanne turned to Jack at once with a smile, but he could have sworn she had been giving her eyes at least to Lairolle and he was furious. The fellow was devouring her with bold admiring gaze—stripping her. Jack felt it like a desecra-

tion and his blood boiled. He wanted to insult him, but could find nothing to say. As Suzanne turned to Jack smiling Lairolle said:

"Eh bien; Mademoiselle; ça se fèra, j'y veillerai" (I 'll see to it) and he was gone.

Suzanne's smile vanished when she saw Jack glowering:

"What's the matter, Jack?" she cried in astonishment, "aren't you well?"

"I'm all right," he said sulkily, thinking her unconsciousness put on.

"You're not nice to-day," she said.

"Not so nice as Lairolle, eh?"

She got angry at once: "What do you mean—Lairolle? You must be mad."

"No," he retorted, "but I have eyes in my head and I saw."

"You saw nothing," she cried flaming, "nothing; do you hear? You're telling lies. There was nothing to see," she added disdainfully, turning away.

Her indignation showed him that she was telling the truth and already to his surprise his anger had nearly ebbed away, but still he felt injured, he hardly knew why.

"What were you talking to Lairolle for? He's only a *sous-officier.*"

"That's my business," she retorted, "you have no right to question me."

"As you like," he replied shortly, "when you see me making eyes at a pretty girl, you'll perhaps get the same answer."

"Oh, how stupid you are," she said, stamping her foot and flushing. "I was only asking him," she burst out, "but—I won't tell you," she broke off, "you make me ashamed," and she turned away, her breast heaving.

"Do tell me," he pleaded, taking her into his arms, "I want to know." Then, seeing the big tears in her eyes, he cried repentant, "Oh I'm sorry, I'm sorry—forgive me."

"I was only asking him," she said, choking down her sobs, "to get some fireworks for your birthday, and you get cross; and I don't know what I have done; you make me miserable."

"Oh, I'm sorry," he cried. "Shall I go on my knees and beg pardon?" and he went on his knees at once and stretched his arms up to her.

He looked so funny and she was so relieved to think it was all nothing and he did care for her that she burst out laughing through her tears and he drew her down and she stooped and kissed him and left sticky wet drops on his forehead which he tried to shake into his mouth by way

of penance. Suzanne laughed again at this and shook away her tears and peace was made.

The reconciliation was completed by kisses and promises of love. Jack took completer possession of her than before, for he confessed to her that he was very jealous and that when he was jealous it was like having a thorn in his foot, which he couldn't get at, but which she must take out at once.

Suzanne listened with big eyes approving: "If it is only jealousy, I'll soon cure that," she cried deliciously pleased, "but you frightened me; I thought you disliked me and it hurt so; I thought you were only making a pretext of Lairolle, for I don't care for him at all; he doesn't exist for me, and that made me angry."

And again and again she gave her lips.

It must not be thought that the jealous misunderstandings were all on Jack's side; though, as there were no girls in the prison and many men, there were more occasions for his discontent.

One evening they went to the theatre to hear a play of Corneille, *Polyeucte,* and the heroine was the famous actress Mademoiselle Clairon; Jack thought her wonderful with a beautiful face as expressive as her voice. She threw such passion into her lovemaking that she swept the youth

away. In the prison scene, when the heroine is converted by her lover and becomes a Christian, Jack's eyes filled with tears.

Suzanne had been a little annoyed by the warmth of his admiration for Mademoiselle Clairon and had been watching him. When she saw his rapt face her heart grew cold as lead; she felt that Clairon was only acting, that it was the beautiful words which gave her such power; she wished she could say such things, but she couldn't; she felt very stupid and that made her angry. Then she noticed Mademoiselle Clairon's make-up and saw that her figure had grown heavy. "She was old, old," she said to herself, "forty or forty-two at least, and if the make-up were washed off she would be all wrinkly and have crows' feet round her eyes and skin like a plucked fowl."

Just then she caught Jack staring in admiration and she burst out laughing. He turned crossly to her with a question in his face, and she retorted wickedly:

"Is it her crows' feet or her double chin you admire?" At heart she was defiant, contemptuous. But Jack didn't understand.

"She's wonderful," he cried. "I don't see any crows' feet and her voice is music——"

When they got home and the Colonel went in

to change his boots and his uniform Jack tried to kiss Suzanne.

"No, no," she exclaimed, pushing him off and looking at him with critical, hard eyes. "I'm tired, don't worry me. I don't want to kiss," and she turned her head away.

"What is it?" he cried in surprise.

"Nothing," she answered wearily, disdainfully. "I'm a little tired; that's all."

He hadn't sympathy enough to understand a jealousy that was silent because it was of the heart and not of the senses and brought with it a feeling of humiliation that intensified the suffering.

"What is it, dear?" he asked, again distressed by her coldness, not even dreaming of any jealousy on her part, for Mademoiselle Clairon had only spoken to his brain and artistic feeling and not at all to his desire.

But Suzanne looked at him out of hard, expressionless eyes and said nothing. Jack was really distressed at her angry obstinate silence.

Just then the Colonel came in full of the performance, which he considered excellent.

"Extraordinary," cried tactless Jack, agreeing with him. "Clairon spoke with such passion, she made one's heart beat."

Suzanne could stand no more. She was tingling

with indignation. Clairon was old, old and ugly; he was a fool; she had had too much of it; she couldn't care for anyone so stupid as to fall into ecstasy over an old painted hag.

"I'm tired, I'm going to bed," she said listlessly in a toneless voice.

"All right," said her uncle, unheeding, kissing her, "a good night's sleep will set you up again," and he let her go.

She just nodded to Jack and went. But Jack could not let it end there; as he sat and thought of her weary pale face his heart contracted; had he done anything wrong? What was the matter? Could she be angry with his praise of Mademoiselle Clairon? Impossible, but——

What excuse could he make to see her.

"I think Mademoiselle should have her *bouillon;* do you think I might take it up to her?"

"If you like," replied the Colonel yawning, evidently surprised, "but she said she was not hungry."

Jack seized the thick cup and went upstairs and knocked at the door. It was opened almost immediately by Suzanne, who, as he could see by the dim light of the candle, had not taken her things off.

"I brought you your *bouillon,*" he cried, "you really must take it; you look very tired."

"Thanks," she said in a toneless voice, "but I don't want it."

Jack put the cup down at once on the floor and ventured to step into the room and take her in his arms. "What is it?" he whispered.

"Nothing," she replied, as if surprised.

"But there must be something," he went on, "and I love you so I couldn't sleep while you are so changed."

She looked at him, considering him.

"You know that," he cried, "if you're not happy my love makes me miserable; come, naughty; what is it? The thorn?"

"Oh no, no," she said, all the more determined to conceal her feeling, now that she began to think it was perhaps not justified. "I'm very tired, that's all; I don't know why."

In spite of the repetition of "tired" Jack felt she was thawing and kept on caressing and assuring her of his love. At length he found the right note.

"You were looking so well this evening," he said, "when we first went to the Theatre, radiant, with that pretty lace thing round your face, lovely."

"Did you think so?" she asked and as by a miracle the colour flooded her cheeks again and her eyes grew bright.

"Of course," replied Jack, kissing her, "you know you're the loveliest girl alive—better dressed, too, than anyone."

"Oh, no," she said, with an air of thoughtful fairness, "Mademoiselle Clairon's dress in the third act as the Emperor's daughter was superb; it gave her distinction, elegance."

"She never had your eyes, or skin or mouth," cried Jack with love's cunning, kissing her again. And now she kissed him in return with clinging tenderness, yielding herself to him. The truth was that in the revulsion of feeling from loss and loneliness to possession and joy she thought of him for the first time as her very own, her man, her lover, and at once her lips grew hot, and at the thought that he must notice it she hid her face on his shoulder in confusion. But her soft kiss had set him aflame, though he did not realise the reason, and with one arm round her waist and the other round her neck he held her to him, kissing her again and again.

Suddenly they heard the Colonel's voice from below: "Why don't you come down?" he said sharply. "Let Suzanne go to sleep."

In silence Jack pressed the cup into her hand and she drank now at once, putting her other hand on his with a gesture of ineffable tenderness. As he took the cup he bent his head and kissed her breast before hurrying downstairs.

The intercourse with Suzanne was a perpetual education for Jack; again and again as in the case of Lairolle he was astonished by her unselfish thought of him. Bit by bit he was simply forced to the conclusion that, just as his love was made up of three parts desire and one part affection, hers was made up of three parts tenderness and one part passion. He came to realise that in all the offices of love she was easily, completely his superior: he wouldn't admit it to himself, but in the back of his mind he was always sure of it, and this consciousness that she was continually thinking of him and his well-being made it increasingly easy for him to forgive her outbursts of temper. She was astonishingly vain and quick-tempered, but her anger soon blew over or talked itself out, and she never sulked or bore malice; seemed incapable indeed of even remembering injuries. She was an amusing companion, too, always vivid and gay, and as observant as she was irreflective, with an astonishing fund of common-sense and sober prudence that translated themselves into all sorts.

of quaint proverbial expressions—the small currency of intelligence.

When it came to staying up late at a dance or drinking a glass extra of champagne "Bah" she would cry, *"une fois n'est pas coutume."* Consoling phrases, ripe fruits of experience, were always in her mouth: "work brings health: saving wealth," and, above all: "luck and ill-luck: sunshine and shower ripen the corn."

Jack's self-tormenting, inquisitive mind was as foreign to her as his ever present desire. She was as normal, healthy, as he was abnormal and passionate. The promiscuity of the house, the incessant intercourse tempted him continually: the presence of her uncle even was an additional sting. The three were perhaps together talking when the Colonel would be called away on some question of the prison: at once Jack would take Suzanne in his arms and begin kissing and fondling her. The Colonel would return, and the pair had to separate and pretend to be talking like a brother and sister would talk.

If Jack were reading in the parlour Suzanne would hurry in and kiss him; if she passed him on the way to the market or returning he would seize and kiss her; sitting opposite each other at table their feet sought each other's inevitably.

Gradually as she taught him tenderness he awakened her passion. The truth was the kiss she had given him that night after the theatre in her bedroom was always in his mind. He could never be satisfied, he felt, till he could get her to kiss him like that again.

But for a long time he could not find the way to his desire. He tried to excite her by kissing and caressing her, and was vaguely disappointed with the result, a little hurt by her self-control. It was chance helped him to better knowledge. Returning from a drive one day they were stopped at the *octroi,* and while waiting to be allowed to pass they were approached by some beggars—a man and wife with a young baby: they were all emaciated, starving, woe-begone. Suzanne gave all she had, a couple of francs, to the mother: Jack asked the man why he didn't work? He replied that he had had to pawn all his carpenter's tools to get bread, and now could not get work at his trade without tools.

"How much does a set of tools cost?" asked Jack.

"At least a hundred francs," replied the man with despairing eyes, "with tools I could soon get out of this misery": he scarcely dared even to hope.

"Here are the hundred francs," replied Jack, handing him the money. The man burst into tears, the wife tried to kiss Jack's hand. . . .

As soon as the carriage was through the *octroi* and moving along the road Suzanne turned to Jack and flung her arms round his neck:

"You great Jack," she cried; "I love you."

And as their lips met he realised at once that she was kissing him again with real passion, as she had kissed him in the bedroom. The way to her senses was through her heart. He soon discovered that every time he moved her to admiration by some generosity or to sympathy by some tender unselfishness or even gratified her vanity by some far-fetched praise, she rewarded him with a more complete abandonment. At length he had found the key: love in her was more of the spirit than of the body.

Suzanne was even quicker to solve the enigma of sex as it presented itself to her. At first she believed that all she had to do to win him was to give herself to him completely. But she soon discovered that by withholding herself and giving a little she increased his desire. With all a Frenchwoman's instinctive quickness and resolve to win sovereignty over her lover Suzanne studied Jack and soon realised that he cared most for her when

she was at her proudest, coldest and most indifferent. He loved to win her anew at each meeting, and desired her most when she showed him some unexpected beauty of figure or of colouring. The way to his heart was through his sense of beauty and his passionate desire. Every time she yielded something to him she did it as if reluctantly, and she was aware of an increase of tenderness on his part and of passion in herself. It was ineffably sweet to her to be able to call forth his desire at will; it gave her a sense of power that gratified the inmost fibres of her vanity. So they came nearer the supreme moment day by day.

One evening Suzanne was a little out of temper, and Jack had found it difficult to win her and ease the tension: they were never long enough alone, he said to himself bitterly.

Before he could make up his mind what to do Suzanne said "Good-night" indifferently and went upstairs. The Colonel followed what he called "the good example," and perforce Jack, too, had to go to bed. From his room Jack could hear Suzanne moving about for a long time; her little feet seemed to be walking on his heart. He pictured her undressing and re-lived again those moments of their life together which had marked stages in their increasing intimacy; again he saw

her lift the lantern above her head and her short sleeve fall back revealing the white beauty of her arm; again he saw her thrown back in the carriage and caught a glimpse of her limbs, or he pictured her at some dance: she was as lissom, slender, he said to himself, as a willow wand, and when you strip off the rough bark you have a most delicate, smooth, shining whiteness beneath: his breath came heavily: he was all pulses, throbbing; his mouth parched: without conscious purpose he took off his boots and opened his door: all dark: he closed his door behind him and went softly up the stairs. At her door he stopped and listened—nothing: he couldn't knock. A long time he stood, then he heard her turn restlessly: she was in bed: he gasped for breath and just touched the door: no sound. After waiting a little he tapped with one finger almost noiselessly and waited again: nothing: his heart sank: he put up his hand to tap louder and the door was not there; it had opened noiselessly and then he distinguished the white outline of her. He stepped inside and took her in his arms:

"You must not," she breathed.

But he felt her warm, soft body through the nightdress and, gathering her in his strong young arms, he bore her to the bed:

"No, no," she whispered; but his lips were on hers and, with a long sigh, she gave herself to his embrace. . . .

The days that followed were like mornings in mid-summer—the freshness of virgin feelings, the heat of maturity. Strange to say it was Suzanne who was most changed: she had no temper now, no sharp answers; her very being seemed dissolved in tenderness; her eyes followed Jack about in shy content; the Colonel must have noticed the change in her had time been given him.

But in the first blush of their happiness came a letter from Jack's father telling him if he didn't return soon he would never see his mother alive. It was as if an earthquake had shaken him out of a delicious dream, harshest reality sharpened by self-reproach. It was time to act, not loiter, he felt, and he dismissed his self-accusations for the moment. He must get away: who would help him? It was curious that he first thought of the Doctor: Sauvan was so cool, so reasonable that Jack exaggerated the value of his counsel. He sought him out, but the Doctor had no sympathy to waste on others: he felt that Jack's affection and anxiety were extravagant; mothers usually died first; he recommended him to see the

Colonel; the Colonel could help him if anyone could, for he knew Bonaparte, and Bonaparte since his return from Egypt was all-powerful in France.

Chilled and rebuffed by the Doctor's coolness, Jack made up his mind to see Suzanne. He translated the letter to her and found all the sympathy he desired.

"Uncle will write to Bonaparte," she said, "and he will get your freedom: you must go back." She grew white with apprehension as she realised how completely they would be separated, but she still held to her idea.

At once they sought out the Colonel and laid it before him. He declared that he would write to Bonaparte at once, and that he felt sure of the result. And he wrote to Bonaparte without more ado, praying him under the circumstances to give Jack his exchange.

As the letter remained for a week unanswered Jack's anxiety became painful. The Colonel was as sympathetic as possible: he wrote to the authorities proposing to let Jack go to London to negotiate an exchange with some French officer whom the French authorities should select, and if that was impossible he asked that he might be allowed to free him, taking his parole that he

would return in six months if he couldn't make any exchange; and when this letter remained unanswered for a week or so, he put a period to Jack's anguish by saying that if he didn't receive an answer in another week he would take the responsibility on himself and let Jack go. Jack immediately packed and made ready, and Suzanne helped him. Often as they put some things together her eyes would fill with tears, and Jack would take her in his arms and kiss her and comfort her, and tell her how kind his mother had been to him; how kind to everyone; how good she was: and the two young things would hold each other and kiss with wet eyes. It was Suzanne's perfect sympathy in his distress which won Jack completely.

Without telling Jack Suzanne went to her uncle and begged him to let Jack go without further delay, persuaded him even to accompany Jack to Boulogne and put him on a vessel for England; and next morning the Colonel told Jack that he could go, on his parole to return within six months.

Jack had only time to see Suzanne for a moment: he held her in his arms and promised that in all cases before six months he would be back again. With wet eyes she nodded that she was sure of it, and the two parted.

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

THEY took six or seven days to get to Boulogne, and after the first day Jack found he could pass muster as a Frenchman among uneducated people. He was dressed more or less in French fashion, and his accent in ordinary conversation was fairly good; but when he left the phrases of constant use, his accent suffered with his grammar.

At Boulogne Jack soon discovered in the port an English smuggler who undertook for ten pounds to land him at Dover. He was astonished to find on parting with Caressa how he had come to like the warm-hearted little man. The Colonel embraced him on both cheeks and Jack hugged the Colonel just as heartily.

"I don't need to promise you," said Jack, "that I shall be back within the six months," and the Colonel nodded contentedly.

Before Jack had been an hour on board the smuggler he was thankful for the fair wind.

The cabin where they took their meals was dirty to a degree and alive with vermin. Jack was glad to get out of it, and for the rest of the passage stood by the weather bulwarks lost in his own thoughts and fears.

At Dover he got a carriole, and in two hours was rattling over the rough Head. At a turn in the road, where the lands of The Court began, he could see Hurstpoint Bay and the village in the light. Again he was struck with it as with a little picture: it was exactly like a painted village and bay: the quiet of it all, the peace made an extraordinary impression on him. . . . He had left the place a boy: he was coming back as a man. Would the people see how he had altered? He would be naturally the first man in the village he thought: he knew so much more than the others did. Suddenly his vanity was hushed: was his mother very ill? The apprehension grew on him.

When they came in front of the Inn his heart was like lead. As he jumped out of the carriole a little man came to the door dressed all in black. The clothes made him unfamiliar: Jack started:

it was his father; he seemed to see him for the first time: he looked an old man; must be sixty, thought Jack; sturdy still and strong, but the skin round the eyes puckered, wrinkled; he was noticeably lame, too, and had grown a little stout, perhaps because of the lameness. All these thoughts and a hundred more rushed through his mind as he jumped out and took his father's hand.

"Too late; she was buried three days ago."

Jack's being seemed to stop:

"Impossible!" he cried: he couldn't realise that his mother had gone out of his life forever; it seemed unthinkable.

"A good wife," said his father with unwonted emotion, "and a good mother, Jack."

Jack couldn't trust himself to answer; memories of all her sweetness, amiability and gentleness coming over him in a flood.

In the parlour he listened to what his father had to tell him of the last illness. He learned that she died quite peacefully, composing herself to sleep by saying that perhaps when she woke Jack would be there—"I know he's coming," she had said again and again.

A little later his sister came in. Jack was astonished to find her quite grown up, rather pretty, and very affected with all sorts of society manner-

isms; in fact, she had become a new person whom Jack had to get to know and for some time he found it difficult to accustom himself to the change.

With the love of learning which seems inborn in the Celt, Morgan had sent his daughter to the best boarding school he could hear of in London, regardless of expense, and the girl had returned home with all the prejudices, beliefs and habits of select society. Her dress seemed to Jack indecent, though it was more modest than the usual London fashion; it was cut so as to show the breasts and Emily had a very pretty fair skin. She talked familiarly of "men of fashion" and of "Cecil" in the same breath, so that Jack had a little difficulty in picturing Cecil Barron in the new rôle. When questioned about him she said he was "good style," with a patronising air which Jack felt to be a little comic.

While he was talking to his sister his father went out and brought in Nancy. She, too, had changed: had become a sort of village beauty, rather full-blown, Jack thought. She didn't seem as merry as of old, though she could still laugh, and her sauciness had a tinge of assurance that made it almost boldness. Jack saw at a glance now that the secret of her success was probably the

ever-present sense of sex in her. Men were men to Nancy, and she reminded everyone of them that she was a woman.

While his sister went up to change Jack went out into the bar and kitchen, and was amazed to find how the proportions of everything had altered. It was not only that the rooms were smaller than he had thought them; but they were quite different. He was struck by the lowness of the ceilings, which he had never noticed before; he could almost touch the rafters of the kitchen with his hand. The stairs, which had seemed so broad to him, were of hardly more than ordinary width. The space in front of the bar was really made larger by part of the passage which gave access immediately to the kitchen. He hadn't pictured it in this way. It took him a day or two to get accustomed to the new perspective.

He was in the bar one afternoon a week or so later talking to Nancy when a big showily dressed fellow lounged in with a great swagger, whom Jack recognised with a start as Crosby.

"Hullo, Master Jack," he cried, "out of prison at last?"

The air was patronising, contemptuous; but Jack didn't take offence: he contented himself with a nod and smile: he wondered to himself

afterwards why he was glad to see Crosby, whom he had never liked.

"You look quite a Frenchman," Crosby went on, pointing with his cane disdainfully at Jack's sword.

Jack said nothing.

"Have a drink?" was Crosby's next question.

"No, thanks," replied Jack curtly, turning on his heel and leaving the bar. Crosby exchanged a smiling glance of intelligence with Nancy as he took off his hat and sat down. In spite of something antagonistic, challenging, in Crosby's manner, Jack felt that he was intelligent looking, the forehead broad and high, the eyes large and dark —besides, he was what men call a fine figure, though inclined to be stout.

Jack met his sister in the hall dressed for a walk in a toque with three enormously high feathers like *fleurs de lis:* in a few minutes she had told him all he wanted to know. Crosby, it seemed, hadn't done as well at Cambridge as had been expected: he was now by way of studying for the Bar in London, but was content to spend a great part of his time in the village and a good deal of it in the Inn. Clearly Emily didn't think much of him.

"And Carrol?" Jack asked.

"Carrol is quite different," she declared, "a gentleman; very nice, very religious; in love with poetry and vestments, and what he calls 'plain song'; he often asks after you," she added quietly.

Suddenly, as they walked down the street, they came in view of the little port.

"That's the *Dolphin* surely?" cried Jack.

"I suppose so," said his sister, indifferently.

"What about Riding and Knight?" asked Jack.

"Oh, they came back," said his sister, "father told you all about that in his second letter."

"I never received it," cried Jack. "I must go and see Riding."

His sister let him go alone; she didn't care, she said a little daintily, for the Port, though she sometimes went to see Mrs. Riding, who was "a superior person."

As Jack went down the hill he grinned to himself. Mrs. Riding "a person," Carrol "a gentleman," Cecil "a man of high fashion"; the London school had turned his sister into a snob filled to the mouth with "nice distinctions." This unreal hierarchy and its claims struck him with contempt. In a short time he was to recognise this atmosphere on all sides of him as the English note; a false standard of values guarded religiously. Surprised by it here for the first time,

he shrugged his shoulders disdainfully, and went on the more eagerly to see Riding.

For a moment or two he hailed the *Dolphin* in vain; then a man came up on deck and at once pulled up the little dinghy and rowed her ashore; it was Riding himself.

Jack was astonished at the warmth he threw into his greeting; he was delighted to shake hands with him, eager to find whether his old kindly estimate of him was justified.

"How did you escape?" he cried, and Riding laughed: "Ho! Ho! Ho!"

Jack smiled at the familiar shout.

"The French were very kind, but I thought it better to swim," said Riding, "than be taken on board the frigate."

"And Knight?" cried Jack.

"Oh, Knight came, too; he swims like an eel; I don't believe I'd ever have landed if it hadn't been for him. I was tired out, and he helped me on shore; then I talked and he kept quiet, and with that money of yours I found in the cabin we got along famously. Ho! Ho! Ho!" he laughed again.

"Why do you laugh?" asked Jack, somewhat intrigued.

"I was laughing," replied Riding, "because in

the little village where we got the fishing smack to come across the man was in great doubt whether to give us up to the authorities or to land us on the English coast. But when I made it clear to him that he would get a thousand francs in gold his greed overcame his patriotism. I laughed at the thought of his face when he was considering whether he couldn't get the money and give us up as well."

"And Chips and Newton?" cried Jack.

"Chips has started that building yard of his," said Riding, "he's doing very well: and Newton is out with the *Mary*. We captured a little French ship a couple of months ago and got a bit of money out of it. Your father gives us a quarter now of the profits; makes us keen. Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!" and Riding roared again.

"What is Newton like?" asked Jack.

"A good man," cried Riding, "a very fine fellow and first-rate sailor."

"And Knight?" asked Jack.

"My second self," replied Riding, "after that swim I can't part from him. He's a great glutton and has no conscience, but he's a born fighter—a sort of wolf-man. Ho! Ho! Ho!" and again he roared.

The great laugh no longer annoyed Jack as of

old. He began to see that it was partly nervous, partly the trumpet, so to speak, of a keen sense of humour: besides, Riding's characterisation of Knight was astonishingly true: Jack, too, had caught the wolf look in Knight's lean, pointed face, prominent great ears and quick, hot eyes.

In his turn Riding wanted to know about Gosport, Weetman and the rest; and Jack told him in a short time very summarily all about the French prison, and how well he had been taken care of, and what friends he had made there. He saw at once that Riding understood everything. He noticed, too, for the first time, that Riding was good looking, with broad forehead, long, fair moustache and regular features; the thoughtful eyes alone would have made any face attractive. A certain natural kindliness seemed to emanate from the man. It was with warmer heart through having met him that Jack took his way again to the Inn.

When he got back he found his sister talking to a very handsome man of just over middle height, dressed foppishly in the extreme of fashion. Jack was rather touched to find that Cecil Barron, for it was he, met him with a great deal of friendliness in spite of a marked affectation.

"My dear fellow," he said, "so glad to meet

you. Your sister tells me you have had all sorts of adventures, and have managed to get out of a French prison by giving your *parole d'honneur* to return or find an exchange. Very good style of them I must say."

Jack smiled. He knew now where his sister had got her love of "good style" from.

"You must come up to The Court and tell us all about it," Barron continued condescendingly; "we've only Nugent and Selwyn staying with us, and your old antagonist, Myring, comes across now and then. Would you bring your sister and come to-morrow to dinner?

"It's very kind of you," replied Jack, hesitating to accept what he felt was thought to be a great favour.

Cecil turned to Emily, who said:

"We should like to very much; it's very good of you": she seemed to underline the words with her glance.

Jack noticed with interest that she had fine eyes and was really pretty, and Cecil seemed to think so, too.

Somehow or other Jack felt that the flirtation between the pair had gone a good way, and this made him curious. Had Cecil Barron lost any of his old pride? Would he really marry Emily?

Remembering hints his father had let drop he began to think that he might do worse: Emily was very pretty: but vainglorious pride is apt to be stubborn.

As Cecil had to get back, Emily and Jack went with him to the nearest lodge and there took leave, strolling back together. Jack tried to pump his sister, but could get nothing out of her. Sir George Barron was very feeble, he learned; but Lady Barron still reigned at The Court.

"What is the girl like?" he asked at length.

"Margaret," Emily said, "is very peculiar: I don't think her pretty: she's standoffish: you must judge for yourself. She's eager to meet you, I think, but she's about a great deal with Selwyn."

Jack could get nothing more out of her. He wondered that night whether there was anything more to get.

His thoughts ranged over all the different personalities. He was struck most perhaps by Riding's sense and manliness and by the high-flown affectations of his sister and Cecil Barron. What would The Court be like, he wondered; and his thoughts wandered back to his boyhood when it was such a great distant place; thence to Suzanne and the old Colonel and Sauvan the philosopher.

He was astonished to find that the little Colonel and Suzanne were as near and dear to him as his own people, with the exception of his father: they were as natural, as human, as lovable——

CHAPTER II

AS the next day happened to be fine, Emily thought they might as well walk to The Court. She made Jack revise his dress: she insisted on his putting on a great cravat, which she wound round his neck many times and tied for him in the mode of London. Jack laughed, but met her views as far as he could, conscious the while that the rude vigour of his square form and resolute, energetic face was not suited by finicking fashions.

"Why didn't Barron ask father?" enquired Jack, as they came to the lodge.

"Oh, father would be quite out of place at The Court," Emily declared, flushing; "it is one of the county seats; it was very good of Cecil to ask us, and we simply cannot drag father about with us everywhere."

"I don't see why not," replied Jack, sturdily, "he's got ten times as much in him as Cecil Barron or his father, and he's made money while they have lost it."

"Money doesn't count with rank," she said, contemptuously, "but do come on or we shall be late."

The grounds of The Court were more beautiful than Jack had imagined: the Park was fairly large, five or six hundred acres, and the house itself, though not stately or beautiful, had an air about it of dignity and comfort; a Queen Anne house, it took its place fittingly among the old trees and broad green lawns decked with flowerbeds and herbaceous borders. The Court was well kept up; three or four men-servants in livery, the Barron livery of blue with yellow lacings. Jack was astonished to find that the quiet deference and courteous formalities made a pleasant impression on him.

In the drawing-room Cecil greeted them with warmth and introduced Jack to Lady Barron, a very large matronly person, bright-eyed and fresh looking in spite of her grey hair. Sir George Barron, it seemed, was ailing and could not come down.

Jack was introduced, too, to Colonel Nugent, a man of about forty, whom he remembered just as little as he did Lady Barron; and then to a Mr. Ivor Selwyn, another exquisite, dressed as elaborately as Cecil. Selwyn looked at him with hard

brown eyes, and just nodded to the introduction superciliously, without attempting to give his hand. Cecil explained to his mother that Jack had just been let out of a French prison on parole.

Everyone seemed surprised to find Frenchmen showing such humanity. As Jack was about to defend the French, the talk was suspended by the entrance of Margaret Barron. She shook hands with Colonel Nugent and with Selwyn, and then moved to Jack and held out her hand:

"It's the second time we've been introduced," she said; "I remember you perfectly."

At the first moment Jack only saw that she was tall, with keen eyes and abrupt manner:

"You've been in prison in France: haven't you?" she went on in a staccato way while flushing slightly as if embarrassed by her own curiosity.

Jack bowed assent: it was only her questioning blue eyes he could remember.

"Interesting it must have been," she jerked out.

Her carriage and face showed pride and resolution, while her manner and way of speaking, Jack thought, had a restrained eagerness which he couldn't explain. He contented himself with answering:

"Very interesting."

"Oh, you know what I mean," she said impa-

tiently, evidently realising that he hadn't understood her exact meaning; "not only the people different: but the circumstances, the revolution, the cruelties, the war—everything. Such a lot to see and understand, wasn't there?" she spoke hurriedly.

"A lot indeed," replied Jack, smiling, for the unaffected interest of the girl was taking, "too much to understand at once: one needs time to assimilate new experiences."

She nodded quickly, with intent eyes. "Lucky you," she cried, enviously.

At this moment Mr. Selwyn sauntered over to them:

"Why lucky?" he asked disdainfully.

"To have the chance of seeing new people and life and adventures, and—everything," the girl snorted, her words tumbling over each other, while her thick brows drew together as if in anger or embarrassment at her own excitement.

Tremendously in earnest and full of life, Jack thought her, and his eyes strayed over her figure; it was superb, he felt with a quickening thrill.

"This is good enough for me," said Selwyn languidly, waving a white hand towards the end of the room, where the footmen had just thrown

open double doors, disclosing the dining-room and table with its white napery and silver.

Margaret shrugged her shoulders contemptuously and walked towards the table. Following her, Jack could not help studying her shape: surely, he thought, no one ever looked so queenly or moved with such supple grace. The impression of stateliness, he decided, was given by her height and carriage and the fact that her shoulders seemed broader than her hips and so threw her dress in long, austere lines to the ground: the suggestion of suppleness was harder to account for; it came from swift movements that were always flowing and graceful. An intoxicating sex-attraction, too, seemed to emanate from her.

The conversation at table was conventional, easy: but not without flashes, showing a certain knowledge of men and affairs, broidery so to speak, on a curious neutral tint—a tolerant acceptance of selfishness as the only possible motive of conduct. The talk turned mainly on France, and soon the English dislike of French ideas fastened on Jack as an enemy.

"How did they come to let you out," asked Colonel Nugent.

"I told the Governor my mother was ill," re-

plied Jack, "and he let me go to negotiate an exchange or else to return."

"An astonishing jailer," remarked Selwyn, with the suspicion of a sneer, "a pity he wasn't at the *Conciergerie* to be as kind to some of the ladies who were murdered."

"Jack was lucky to get away," said Cecil, sententiously: "but an exchange 'll be difficult. Our Government won't treat with those revolutionary villains."

"Wretches," echoed Miss Emily, with a little ladylike shudder as of horror.

Jack was on the point of remonstrating when he caught Margaret Barron looking at him intently: her lips were parted, her eyes had in them a breathless expectancy which set him wondering. What did the strange girl expect him to say? It was foolish, he felt, to dispute with such complacent prejudice as all the others showed: he preferred to keep silence.

Selwyn still directed the talk.

"Buonaparte, I hear, wants to make peace," he said, "but Pitt naturally demands serious guarantees."

Jack noticed that Selwyn pronounced the Italianate name with emphasized correctness, and seemed to take it for granted that Pitt was su-

perior to Bonaparte, and the master of the situation.

"I hope Pitt won't make peace unless the royal line is restored," remarked Lady Barron.

"That, of course, must be a condition precedent," Selwyn hastened to add emphatically.

"I'm afraid in that case," remarked Jack, "the war 'll go on for a long time."

"Perhaps you imbibed republican notions in prison," suggested Selwyn; "you were there a long time, weren't you?"

"Yes," said Jack, "but it's hardly a question of my notions: the vast majority of the French are convinced republicans."

"Oh, the majority!" cried Selwyn, holding up his hands, "the majority have no notions even. The few greedy agitators and regicides are, of course, republicans, but France must come sooner or later to its senses and return to its ancient loyalty."

Jack looked at him in astonishment: such ignorance seemed to him inconceivable; but Selwyn's opinion was evidently received with general favour.

Suddenly Miss Barron broke away from the rest:

"You don't think France will put the Bourbons

again on the throne?" she asked, with quick interest in voice and manner.

"Indeed, I do not," replied Jack, and then the whole pitiable unreality of the talk flooded over him, and he responded frankly to the question in her eyes.

"I don't suppose I could make it plain to you," he began: "but two things I saw in Bordeaux might," and without more ado he told of the starving people in front of the "Hôtel de Ville," and of the hungry children who had followed him about the streets.

"Do you wonder?" he concluded, "that the people are sick of the rulers and ruling classes who have brought them to such misery? All through France mothers still their children by threatening to take them to the *Château* or great house: and the name for squire throughout the country is *hobereau,* as who should say Squire-Kite. The revolt was inevitable: the only wonder is it didn't come long before, and go much deeper," he added significantly.

His passionate speech had an intense effect on Margaret: she was interested as she had never been interested in her life. The incidents in Bordeaux thrilled her, and as the vivid words came her imagination outran them: this was the sort of

talk she had divined and always hoped to hear but never heard; she could scarcely breathe for excitement.

"But what good can it do?" asked Selwyn. "After all, you don't feed hungry people by murdering the nobles and gentry, their natural leaders!"

"The people were robbed and enslaved and brutalised by the nobles and their exactions," cried Jack; "now that they've shaken off their tyrants and taxes, they'll soon get a decent living: they're industrious and saving. Hunger is a dreadful thing," he added; "till you see a starving crowd, you don't realise the horror of it." After a pause he went on: "Revolt's a duty when the rule's bad. We're all inclined to endure the accustomed too long, and to let the old conventions almost stifle us before we rebel."

"How true," cried Margaret, leaning forward in uncontrollable excitement: "how often I've felt that. We let customs fetter us, and duties, and affections, and—oh!—everything—Oh!"

The effect of Margaret's outburst on the company was prodigious: they were all taken aback by her passionate vehemence.

"Margaret, Margaret," warned her mother: but the girl would not be controlled.

"It's true, mother, true," she cried, "revolt is a

duty and," she added slowly, "the first duty." She stopped abruptly as if she had announced an irrevocable decision.

Colonel Nugent and the others hurried to make talk, and give the girl's overwrought feelings time to settle into ordinary channels. Meanwhile, Margaret sat striving for self-control, incapable of speech.

For the last five or six years, owing to Sir George Barron's ill health, Margaret had hardly left the Court for a day; the Barrons saw scarcely any company and the seclusion and sameness of her life had filled the high-spirited girl with a wild longing for freedom and change. She was intellectually curious and eager to know all about life, and so was driven to spend the long hours of leisure in the library, where she had learned much the same lesson of revolt and of pride in her own abilities which Jack had won from mixing with men. Again and again she had been on the point of rebelling; had she known how to cut adrift she would have done it, but she couldn't leave her mother or change her opinions. Yet the revolt Jack preached and the freedom he pictured were what she had ached for; she could not help admiring him. His bold views took her by storm; the passion in his voice thrilled her with kinship of

soul. The bodily attraction too, though less imperious to her, came into account. Jack's energy and originality delighted her, the recklessness in him and the force.

On the others the effect of Jack's talk was very different. The pictures of human suffering had passed before them without arousing sympathy. They hadn't sufficient imagination to be moved. Bit by bit the conversation drifted back into the channel of absorbing interest: "What will the French do next?" "Can a realm like France go on without a King?" Selwyn and the rest could not believe in the stability of such a rule; but Jack again dominated the cynical view with a passionate eulogy of Bonaparte:

"He's not only a great general," he concluded; "but a great administrator as well. All eyes are turning to him in hope," he added.

Everyone felt embarrassed; Bonaparte to them was a sort of ogre; they were all relieved by Selwyn's sneer:

"Is Buonaparte great because he abandoned his army in Egypt to defeat?"

Jack shrugged his shoulders.

"The Nile victory," cried Nugent, "has made us the masters; the French fleet is wiped out; they must sue for peace."

"Our victories at sea," replied Jack, "hardly counterbalance the French victories on land."

"Perhaps Mr. Morgan regrets the victory of the Nile," Selwyn interjected; "he seems to sympathise as deeply with the French as our eloquent representative of Westminster who has gone into seclusion rather than share in his country's triumph."

"I regret the war," said Jack. "I can't see why we should fight the French to put a king on the throne whom they don't want; we should resent their interfering with us in such a matter."

"But surely you see," said Colonel Nugent, "that a republic cannot endure; no country can be happy without a king and constitution."

"Even a bad king," remarked Lady Barron quietly, "is better than none at all," which seemed to sum the matter up definitively.

After lunch Lady Barron went up to Sir George, and the younger people strolled out into the garden. Before Cecil and Emily paired off, Margaret Barron, in her abrupt way, came over to Jack:

"I'm glad we've met," she cried. "Won't you tell me about France? It is all so interesting. You are certainly right; we shouldn't let the French choose our Government for us, and yet

we want to do that for them; but surely all the murderings in Paris and all that burning of castles throughout the country was cruel?"

"The madness of the revenge," Jack replied, "only showed the intensity of their suffering; you have no idea of their misery."

She nodded, her eyes drinking in his words.

"You don't think them more cruel, more vile than other nations?" she persisted, as if determined to root out her prejudice.

"I found them courteous and kindly," he replied: "a little quick-tempered, but without malice."

Again the intent eyes held him, and Jack felt now that there was subtle sympathy between them, an intimate understanding.

"And Bonaparte?" she asked, "have you ever seen him?"

"Never," said Jack, wondering at his own excited interest, "but the Governor of the jail where I was, was a hot partisan of his, and I have had great talks with him; Bonaparte must be an extraordinary man."

"So Mr. Fox thinks," she replied thoughtfully, and then as if to warn Jack she added, "but Mr. Fox is not liked in England; you will find it difficult to speak for the French here. They will dis-

like you, too, if you do?" she put it like a question. Jack shrugged his shoulders with the hardihood of youthful inexperience:

"Let them," he said. "I don't care."

Her eyes glowed in sympathy.

At this moment Selwyn separated himself from Nugent and moved across to them.

"Has Mr. Morgan explained to you why he loves the French so dearly?" he said with smiling superiority to Miss Barron.

"He's given me a great deal to think about," she replied, scanning him coolly: "food for thought and feeling, and much encouragement. Every nation, it seems, has merits of its own."

"It would need a microscope," rejoined Selwyn, "to discover the French virtues; has any good thing ever come out of France?"

The interest Margaret had shown him had taken away some of the antagonism in Jack which Selwyn's opposition had aroused, but the sneer excited him.

"Dozens of things," he cried, "even their battle-song, the Marseillaise, is sung by their enemies."

"A battle-song is hardly a good thing," Selwyn decided, lifting his eyebrows. "Mention one good thing, will you?"

"Napkins at table," remarked Jack, without

thinking that his words might be taken to convey a certain reflection on his hostess.

"Napkins?" queried Selwyn. "What may they be?"

"Small hand cloths," replied Jack, "used at table to wipe the mouth and hands."

Selwyn laughed, "We wash our hands, you see, in England, and have no need of napkins."

"What's that?" cried Colonel Nugent. "What are you laughing at?"

"Mr. Morgan thinks we should have hand cloths at table," said Selwyn, "to wipe our hands as the French have; I told him we were somewhat particular about clean hands and so have no need of napkins."

Nugent threw his head up as if the idea were too preposterous even to talk about:

"All these new-fangled, dirty ideas," he said, "make me angry; I don't even want to hear of them."

There was hardly any more general conversation; Selwyn and Nugent took possession of Miss Barron by walking on each side of her, and though she flashed friendly looks at Jack, and tried again and again to bring him into the conversation, he soon fell out, feeling ostracised and disliked.

It was characteristic of the youth that he began

asking himself at once whether the coldness shown him was due to any fault of his; he might have been more conciliatory, he said to himself, but——

The conviction slowly grew in him that the others were mistaken; that time would show he was right; that some day or other even the English gentry might find out that the use of napkins at meals was not a proof of dirty habits.

He went home with only one thought in him, and only one emotion:

"When should he see Margaret again? Did she like him?" He felt her intent eyes on him, felt that she understood and sympathised with the new ideas in him, the new forces of endeavour and growth. . . .

His sister told him only what he could see for himself, that Selwyn was courting her; "very assiduous," she said with detached indifference, not appearing to notice Jack's interest.

CHAPTER III

A DAY or two afterwards his sister told him that young Carrol had come down from Oxford, and on the same afternoon he met him in the street. Carrol seemed a little shy at first, but the warmth of Jack's greeting gradually thawed him out and the two soon started for one of their old walks over the Head.

Fifty yards further on they met Dr. Crosby face to face. He greeted Carrol in his big boisterous way with a good deal of approval.

"Good reports of you from Oxford," he exclaimed. "A second class is not to be despised. I was pleased, very pleased indeed, I can assure you; but I'm sorry to hear all this about you, Morgan," he said, turning to Jack; "they tell me you've become a red republican, and I don't know what all besides."

Jack smiled and shook his head, but the Doctor wouldn't be interrupted:

"I couldn't believe," he went on pompously, "that any scholar of mine would defend revolu-

tionary and atheistic ideas, for you can take it from me that all revolutionary ideas are atheistic. The whole revolution has come from that school of French materialists like Holbach and Diderot, and that sentimental dog of a Rousseau whom we used to hear so much about twenty odd years ago."

Jack looked at him curiously; the Doctor was evidently in earnest, spluttering indeed with indignation. But Jack had been taking himself to task too recently for speaking his mind to fall into the same fault again at once.

"I don't think, Sir, I'm likely to become a revolutionary," he remarked lightly, smiling the while.

"Glad to hear it, glad to hear it," cried the big man, "but take care; the French are going headlong to perdition, Sir, headlong," and he pursed out his lips, "and—and evil communications—you know——" and he continued on his way, shaking his head, but well satisfied with what he considered convincing arguments well put.

"What does it all mean?" asked Jack.

"I don't know," Carrol replied, "but I hadn't been back an hour when I heard that you were a terrible person. They said you had taken the Barrons to task because they had no hand cloths at lunch, which you said everybody needed to wipe dirty hands and mouths."

Jack laughed outright; it was his first meeting with Dame Rumour, and her gift for fiction annoyed him, but he had really liked Carrol, and therefore left the subject; he wanted to find out all he could about Oxford and his ambitions. Carrol confessed himself rather hesitatingly; he had gone in for the Church, he said, because his father wished him to, but he was glad of it now, for really the English Church had begun to interest him intensely; noble services, touching ceremonial, the words and music of its offices alike beautiful.

Jack wanted to hear more, but as soon as he probed beneath the surface Carrol drew into himself like a snail when the feelers are touched.

"You really believe in God?" asked Jack.

"Of course," said Carrol, opening wide eyes of astonishment.

"And in a life after death for this body of ours?"

"Of course," gasped Carrol again; "you do too, don't you?" he asked in a horrified voice.

"I suppose I do," replied Jack hesitatingly, "but it all seems far away, vague and unreal.

"Not to me," said Carrol simply. "I live with that faith and want to live in it more and more;

it is the thought of the next life that makes it possible to live this one."

For the first time Jack felt something visionary in his pale blue eyes; this Carrol was new to him; the boy Carrol, he felt, had given no hint of the man at all; he wondered whether the impulsive quick-feeling boy whom he had known had disappeared altogether. He questioned further, but Carrol had been shocked a little and would only answer in monosyllables. The talk became perfunctory. . . .

When Jack got back to the Inn he found Riding closeted with his father; he was for leaving them alone, but his father called to him to come in; there was nothing he mightn't hear, they were only talking over the results of the year's work.

Riding had had a successful time, it appeared, and had put a couple of thousand pounds more into Morgan's savings. The old man therefore thought him capable of anything.

Jack was full of indignation at the lies that had been told about him; when he related what had been said about the napkins Riding roared with laughter.

"I've heard too," he cried, "that you have a red cap, and revolutionary followers in the smacks.

Come for a cruise with us," he broke off rising, "and all that will be blown away. But you'll have to wait now till I come back from London."

"Just see," said Jack, "if there's any chance of getting me exchanged for some French officer, will you?"

"I'll do my best," replied Riding, "but I'm afraid you'll have to find a better ambassador."

Jack was vaguely disquieted, but as he had still months before him he put off thinking of the matter for the time.

After Riding had gone Jack probed his father. He wanted to find out the old man's real opinions; had he thought at all on abstract things?

"Should one say what one thinks?" he asked, his argument with Selwyn still in his mind, and forthwith he discovered in his father a curious philosophy of life.

"When I was young," said his father, "I used to want to quarrel with everyone who thought differently from me, but by the time I came to the Inn I had seen the folly of it and had made up my mind to have no opinions, or rather to keep them to myself. Let all men talk as they like, said I; I'll do as I like. As long as they don't quarrel with my deeds I won't quarrel with their words; I've always found it a good plan," he

went on. "Men will help you to make money if you'll only listen to them and smile when they're talking nonsense. There's nothing a man hates so much as to be contradicted and argued with; he'd liefer be robbed than converted. . . . Always be a true-blue Englishman," he added, imitating Dr. Crosby's very roar. "Patriotism is the cheapest way to popularity."

Jack stared at him; he seemed to see for the first time the twinkle in the little grey eyes; his father was very clever; he probably owed his success to his cunning.

His father was much more about the house than he had been before he got lame, and Jack had already noticed that he was still keeping up the old intrigue with Nancy; once or twice Jack felt almost sure he saw him touch Nancy as she passed by. He was certain that there was an understanding between them. But after all what did it matter? His father had a right to do what he liked.

Jack didn't feel quite the same in regard to Nancy. He had taken to avoiding the bar because Crosby was continually there. But one day passing through the yard he looked in at the back door and almost caught Crosby kissing Nancy. She had seen Jack and drawn away, but Crosby's

hand was certainly on her neck and her face was flushed. Jack felt indignant with her, but he wouldn't have her think he was spying on her, and so he kept away from the Inn as much as possible.

This determination drove him to spend most of his leisure with the seamen in the little harbour. Riding returned from London without having brought about an exchange; he could not even get speech with the authorities. But he seemed to accept rebuffs without bearing any malice.

Jack had long talks with him and found him extraordinarily fair-minded in spite of a scanty education. It was Riding who brought him round to Chips' yard. Chips was a little man, even smaller than Jack's father, with a funny little face framed in cocoanut red hair and beard, but he had noticeably intent grey eyes. Chips made up to Jack at once, told him he ought to give him a commission to make a brig that no Frenchman could catch.

"You want a clean pair of heels," said Chips. "You should be able to fight when you like and run away when you like. The little *Dolphin* could do it pretty well, but if your brig had had proper lines she'd have run rings round that French frigate."

Jack thought he might do worse some day or other than entrust Chips with the building of a clipper, for the little shipwright knew his trade.

Even here at the port Jack couldn't get rid of Crosby; one evening, coming up from the *Dolphin,* he saw him turning away from a girl. When he came abreast of her he couldn't help looking at her rather curiously; she smiled at him and nodded pleasantly. Jack went over to her; it was Knight's sister Gretta.

"Why, Gretta," he said, "what are you doing here?"

"I came down to see my brother," she said, "and met Mr. Crosby by chance."

In the course of talk she told him that she was married to a farm labourer and could not make both ends meet on the seven shillings a week of his wages.

"I have to give mother something," she said. "I came down here to get some fish cheap; it's hard for us poor to live."

"But why did you marry a poor man?" Jack asked heedlessly.

"Who else was there to marry in this hole?" she retorted quickly. "If there had been anybody better you may be sure I'd not have chosen poverty . . . "

There was something obsequious, carneying in her manner which Jack didn't like. He gave her a sovereign and she was profuse in thanks.

"I wouldn't see much of Crosby if I were you," he said finally. "He'll do you no good."

"I never see Mr. Crosby," she hastened to answer. "I met him here by chance as I was waiting for my brother; I had to speak to the gentleman when he spoke to me."

From the way she answered Jack felt that her very soul was servile; misery had had its way with her, though by nature she was self-reliant. Seven shillings a week! How could anyone maintain character or decency on such starvation wage?

The port quickly became as tiresome to Jack as the inn and he was soon ready to accept his sister's suggestion that they ought at least to call at The Court. He went there with her one afternoon and fell into the midst of a large company. Some country people had driven across in a great family coach all gilt and glass, suspended on leathern springs—an immense affair drawn by four horses with plumes. There were servants in various liveries in the hall and the drawing-room was crowded. Jack felt altogether out of place in the fashionably dressed throng; some of the visitors he thought eyed him askance.

After listening for ten minutes to the medley of voices he began trying to convey to Emily his desire to get away.

Miss Barron seized the opportunity to come across to him for a moment.

"So you've met Mr. Carrol," she said gaily. "What do you think of him."

Jack could not help seeing that she was at her best; the little excitement of receiving had brought colour to her cheeks and made her vibrant; her height and carriage gave her distinction: he noticed strands of gold in her hair and her blue eyes seemed darker: she was more than pretty.

"He was interesting," Jack hesitated.

Her eyes widened with amusement: "You found him weak, ineffectual?" she smiled. "Not one of the conquerors in life—eh?"

"A little vague and credulous," Jack admitted.

"Sincere though," she added gravely with inscrutable eyes. "Why don't you come here oftener?" she added, probing him.

"I seem like an intruder," he confessed. "My very clothes are different."

"What does that matter?" she cried. "I feel I can learn things from you; you've seen and done things. I'm full of curiosity and so ignorant."

There could be no mistaking her earnestness and sincerity.

"Do come, there's so much I want to know, heaps of things. Do come!"

"I will," he replied simply, "but my mental clothes are just as bad; they're out of fashion too, and probably offensive."

"Then you must be either mad or wise," she declared, laughing. "But come some afternoon soon and we'll discuss it. Promise?"

Jack could not but bow to the request that was half a challenge.

The next moment she was taken away by a brother and sister who wanted her opinion on the best form of side saddle. Was the new fangled idea of a second horn a help or not?

As she went she threw over her shoulder to Jack:

"We've done nothing but talk of napkins ever since you told us about them. I'm having some made."

Jack was warmed and softened by her friendliness, and more than a little astonished by her insight and understanding; she was very quick he felt; curiously right too about Carrol. She excited him strangely; set him thinking rather humbly of his own poor accomplishments. He

had no notion that his own force of character and virility made him interesting to women.

On their way home his sister took him to task; he must mingle with people and talk to them, not stand alone, glowering.

"I have nothing to talk about," he said.

"You must make talk," she replied, "that's the chief art of society; find out what people are interested in," she said, "and get them to talk about that, or, better still, talk to them about themselves; you'll find they all like that subject."

Jack looked at her in wonderment; his sister too was clever in her own way. All people he reflected were probably clever in some way or other. But the social whirligig was as absurd to him as the merry-go-round of a fair; he found it difficult to go to The Court, tedious; of the lot only Margaret was worth knowing.

He began to get a little hopeless in regard to himself; he had no talent for the drawing-room, no talent either for the inn parlour, and not much desire to lounge about the port. What was his place in life? What ought he to do?

Time hung heavy on his hands. In his despair he began to read and first of all naturally enough he began with the newspapers. He found the *Times* stupidly prejudiced and not to be had

nearer than Dover. Apart from the little scraps of news there was nothing in it to interest him: the idiotic partisan views of France and the war; the abuse of Mr. Fox and praise of Mr. Pitt; the caricatures of Mr. Tiernay and Mr. Erskine seemed alike stupid to him.

At a loose end he went up and called at The Court. Margaret was glad to see him, and walked with him to the lodge. His first impressions of her were confirmed; she was quick and fair-minded, astonishingly free of prejudice, and eager to learn—a strong character with considerable power of observation. She was as little patriotic as Jack himself, and he probed to find out how she had come to shake off the general malady.

"When I was a little girl," she said, "our gardener told me one day that the best roses were French, and the best peaches, and I came to the conclusion that perhaps some French men and women too might be exceptional. Then I heard of Charlotte Corday, and she became my favourite heroine; I used to read of her for hours, and cry over the noble way she forgave her enemies, or I imagined she forgave them. No, I don't think I'm a bit patriotic."

"You astonish me," he said. "How did you come to be such a *revoltée?*"

"I don't know," she replied. "From the time I was fourteen I rebelled against the dictation of parents and governess. They could never give good reasons, yet thought they should be honoured and their opinions respected. I was always at war with that view. And both mother and father think all the old ways the only possible ways, and they never reason or doubt, yet they expect you to agree with all they say or do—it's frightful. I used to want to break things after a dispute with daddy."

In her turn she questioned Jack about France and the doings of the Reds, and hung breathless on his lips.

"Oh, how fine," she cried at Caressa's story of the first Italian campaign. "How I wish I had been a man; then I too might have done something. How loathsome to be cooped up here and fed like a fowl—loathsome!"

She was quick-tempered, Jack felt, but with a fund of generosity, and ease of unselfishness which brought him often to wonder. His breath caught when, at the end of the talk, she told him her mother proposed to take her to town soon. The thought of being unable to see her was so bitter that he realised how much he prized the chance talks with her. She consoled him a little by hop-

ing he would come to see them again before they left.

After this visit time hung still more heavily on Jack's hands. He began to spend a good deal of his leisure with books, and when he was not reading his thoughts began to wander more and more to France, to Suzanne and the little Colonel. Why had they not written he wondered? He would write again; and he wrote again and again. Not receiving any answer he took the second or third letter himself to Boulogne and forwarded it from there.

Boulogne was intensely interesting to him. Round the little port of Wimereux a sort of smugglers' camp had been formed of men of both nationalities, daring young fellows for the most part who were unvexed with scruples and willing to do anything for money. Jack found he could buy good French cognac in this camp which had been run up the coast from port to port. Of course it was dear; four times the price it used to be in Bordeaux; but even so it could be sold in England at an immense profit. This was the trade which Riding had found profitable and Jack slipped into it again very easily and made one or two successful trips.

Returning from his third trip he found at the

Inn a letter from Suzanne which put an end to all his hesitation. She began by reproaching him; she had written every week; it was disgraceful of him not to have answered; he must have got at least one letter out of the dozen she had sent. This was the last she would ever write; if she got no answer she would be compelled to tell her uncle that she was *enceinte;* it was terrible to her; she could never forgive Jack his silence; he should have guessed the truth. It was cruel of him to leave her without a word, without a sign, and she supposed that he would neglect his promise to come back within the six months too; for already more than four had passed and there was no word from him, no message, nothing——

Every word of the letter was written in Jack's brain and heart; he blamed himself fiercely; how could he have been so thoughtless? He ought to have known she would have written. Why had she got none of his letters? What was he to do? At once he called his father to counsel; he told him all that had happened and asked him for his advice.

"I shall have to go at once," he said. "I must go."

His father wouldn't hear of it.

"Don't be stupid," he said. "Why should you go back to prison?"

"But I've promised," said Jack.

"Oh, promised!" said his father. "Promises are not important. Besides who's to tell you that this girl is really in that way; she may be putting it on just to get you back. I wouldn't stir."

Jack couldn't be satisfied with that solution. He asked his sister about his *parole*. She thought he ought to go to London himself to arrange an exchange, or, better still, get Cecil Barron to introduce him to influential people.

"What a pity you attacked Selwyn; he has great power, you know. It's all a question of influence," she went on. "Cecil told me that any Minister could get you an exchange."

Jack listened, but he had lost hope. His sister proposed that they should go up to the Court to see Cecil Barron on the matter, and Jack went with her all in a turmoil. He left Emily to put the matter before Cecil while he went for a walk with Margaret. Curiously enough her presence and kindness sharpened the conscience in him; made him see his duty more clearly, while rendering it more distasteful.

"What's the matter?" she asked him at once. "You're troubled about something."

Jack put the question of the parole to her:

"I've been thinking of it," she said. "Of course you'll go back if you don't get an exchange."

Jack bowed his head at once. He had felt all along that that was the only thing to be done.

"There's something else?" she questioned. "What is it?"

Jack put her off at first and then framed a suppositious case without mentioning Suzanne. Margaret listened intently, probing him the while; he felt her interest, winced at her divination.

"I ought not to talk to you about it," he remarked lamely.

"Why not?" she asked quickly.

"You're a girl," he said, "and too young."

"You don't think so," she cried, "or you wouldn't have spoken at all."

"I suppose that's true," he admitted. "I have confidence in your judgment."

She flushed a little, perhaps with pleasure at the implied compliment. All her emotions were reflected in her face and the vivid spirit betrayed itself in vibrating nostrils and quick change of colour.

"Why not tell me the whole truth?" she asked.

"I'm not easily shocked. Women often pretend they are; but it's usually mere pretence."

After a moment's hesitation Jack told his story, veiling it as much as he could; he ended by asking:

"What am I to do?"—hoping he knew not what.

"*You* must know that," was Margaret's quick answer. "Do you love her?"

"I thought I did," hesitated Jack.

"If you did, you do," she decided.

Jack looked at her with miserable sad eyes: "I'm beginning to fear—" he said.

Margaret was resolute.

"If you told her you did, you ought to go back."

Jack bent his head; his voice caught in his throat, then an angry resolution came to him: "You're right. I'll go back."

"Tell her the truth," said she, relenting, "let her decide."

"That would be cruel," replied Jack, "and impossible to me."

"Not so cruel in the long run," cried Margaret, "as the half truth that makes one sick with misery."

"I'll think it over," decided Jack resolutely.

"Good-bye; you've been very good. I wish I were worthy of your kindness."

"Good-bye," repeated Margaret, a little ruefully. "I wish——"

CHAPTER IV

ON their way home Emily told Jack that Cecil had been very kind and had promised to do all he could; he would write at once to London.

"The worst of it is," she said, "that you are not an officer, and the English government will not like to give up a French officer for an Englishman who has not got a commission."

In spite of his weight of anxiety and depression, Jack could hardly help smiling. It seemed to him amusing that the English government should think a French midshipman or lieutenant more important than himself, but he was beginning to realise that the standard of values in England was peculiar.

He told his sister it didn't matter; he intended to go to France at once; she argued against this rather weakly.

"I suppose you must keep your parole," she said.

It suddenly struck him that she had got the phrase from Cecil Barron; she seemed to have

no mind, no opinion outside her own interests; she was a pretty doll-woman, that was all.

When they got to the Inn Jack called his father into the parlour and told him that he had made up his mind to go back; could he have the *Dolphin* to take him to Boulogne?

His sister interrupted them:

"I've told Jack," she said, "that I think it nonsensical; of course he must keep his parole, but he has still a month, and if he takes my advice and goes up to London and is nice to Cecil Barron and his friends they'll get him an exchange and he needn't go back at all, but he won't listen to me; I only hope you'll have more influence with him, father," and she went upstairs to change her feathers, leaving the father and son together to share the responsibility of decision.

"Sit down, lad," said the father. "Tell me why you've made up your mind?"

"Two things," replied Jack, "the English government won't give me an exchange; they think any French officer worth more than I am. I shall have to go back in a month in any case. Besides——"

The father looked at him: "One thing at a time; if the British government knew that you had thirty thousand pounds in the Funds, and

that I had a bit over double that, they'd think you worth as much as a French officer. We'll take Barron with us and go up and tell 'em."

"Why didn't you do it before?" questioned Jack, "when I spoke to you four months ago?"

"I had no idea," replied his father coolly, "that you really thought of going back. I should not go a step, and I thought you'd have as much sense."

"You wouldn't go now?" asked Jack.

The father grinned and his little eyes twinkled:

"I wouldn't think of it," he said. "Do you know what I'd do in your place."

"No," said Jack, looking at him without much hope or interest.

"I'd go to London to Cecil Barron's tailors and get rigged out in the top of the fashion; I'd come back here and lease The Grange and live in it; I'd buy a couple of horses and take Miss Nugent out driving, and when everyone was admiring my horses and my house I'd go to The Court and ask Miss Barron to come out for a drive with me; you'd win her, I tell you," he wound up vehemently. "You'd win her easily. . . . The old man's finished; the port wine has done for him, he hasn't a year to live; Lady Barron's nothing; the boy's a weak spendthrift.

We've got forty thousand pounds' mortgage on The Court; within this year if we put on the screw the girl will come down and beg you to marry her to save her brother and her mother if for nothing else. Think it over, Jack. Life's a game," he added reflectively. "You've all the best cards, why throw your hand away?"

Jack looked at him; at length he was beginning to see his father as he was.

"Did you marry mother?" he asked, "because she had this Inn?"

His father looked a little confused for a moment, and then a slow smile stole over his face:

"I was a young fool in those days," he confessed, "and she was a fine woman; but I don't think I'd have married her if she'd had nothing; I'd have kissed her," he added grinning.

Jack's eyes grew more miserable still; his father had gone too far.

"No need for talking," he said. "Each of us must go his own way in life, my way is back to France; I don't want to cheat," he added. "At any rate I won't cheat those who have trusted me; I couldn't if I would——"

His father tapped the table with his fingers; he looked at the boy whom he loved, of whom

in his heart he was very proud. He took in the hard-set face, the despairing sad eyes. "He's like his mother," he said to himself, "the same big kind heart," and his bowels yearned over the lad. Still life was a battle to him and he couldn't give up the fight; he was too obstinate for that.

"Did you tell her so?" he asked Jack.

Jack looked at him, only half understanding.

"Miss Barron, I mean," his father added quietly.

Jack nodded.

"And she told you to go back?"

Jack nodded again.

The old man's hairy fingers beat a little tattoo on the table, a habit with him when thinking profoundly.

"She said nothing more?" he questioned further.

"Nothing," Jack replied with a sigh, "but that I was to tell Suzanne the truth."

His father stopped the tattoo on the table and looked up at Jack:

"And you will?" he asked eagerly.

Jack shook his head: "I couldn't; how can you hurt someone who cares for you?"

Again the old man was baffled, annoyed, an-

gered; and yet at the bottom of him he was conscious of admiration for the youth.

"You will do as you please," he said at length. "You know I'll always stand by you," and their eyes met.

Jack put both hands on the old man's shoulders and nodded his head smiling.

"I know, dad," he said, "I know."

The old man rose without a word and went out: "The look of his mother," he said to himself as he went; "her very eyes."

That same night Jack started for Boulogne in the *Dolphin;* they had to leave the course twice to avoid English cruisers; since the battle of the Nile the narrow seas were alive with them and the pressgangs were at work continually.

Jack had gone on board with a heart like lead, but the excitement of being pursued and escaping changed his ideas, put new eager life into him, and when at length he landed at the smugglers' camp one dark night he was quite happy to say "Goodbye" to Riding and climb up the sandy dunes by himself. He knew every foot of the way to the inn beside the harbour; he knew, too, that the Innkeeper, Monsieur Pin, would give him a good welcome. As he hastened up the winding foot-

path he sprang from one tussock of stiff grass to another out of sheer delight in his own strength of limb and physical exuberance of life. The spice of danger in the adventure did him good.

"Great prey for a smuggler," he said to himself, for he had a thousand pounds in the belt round his waist, but he had a sword by his left side and a pistol just under his hand; and supreme confidence in his own skill and strength. Pin might be dead; he might find French soldiers in possession, but after all he was only going back to imprisonment; and he strode on lustily, every now and then running fifty yards out of sheer delight in his own speed.

He found George Pin at the inn and got a warm welcome from him. He sat up half the night talking to some of the French smugglers—good fellows for the most part, though some of them would have cut his throat for the gold he had with him.

Next morning he took a seat in the diligence that left Boulogne to follow the sandy coast southwards. But before leaving Boulogne he sent a letter to Suzanne:

> Viens de recevoir ta première lettre, chérie: suis en route. Ton Jack.

The further he went the gladder he was to be going back. He grew eager to see Suzanne again; would she be as pretty as ever? he wondered. Would she be glad to see him or cross? Probably cross; she was a little spitfire, but a kind heart. And old Caressa, he was a dear. Would he still be disputing with Sauvan? Jack noticed that he didn't care much for Sauvan; the philosopher seemed thin, heartless, bloodless—"damn his philosophy," said Jack to himself: "one moment of Caressa's hero-worship is worth a year of it." As he thought of the little fiery Frenchman spluttering with anger at the pragmatic philosopher he roared with laughter. The world was a comic place; himself rather a comic person; here he was hastening to do something that he didn't want to do; but didn't he want to do it?

He saw Suzanne's face again as she was packing for him and his heart went out to her. He recalled her as she held up the light in the dungeon and her bare arm shone in the gloom. Again he was at her bedroom door and as he put his hand up to tap, the door drew away and he saw her white figure and took her warmth in his arms. . . .

He was glad to go back, he'd have a great

reception, they'd all be glad to see him. The way seemed long, the hours dragged.

Village after village slid behind, and at length he came through the gap between the hills and recognised the two pine trees; another turn of the road and he saw Cherbourg lying before him with *l'Ile Pelée* to the right and the unfinished breakwater in the middle and the fort on the island opposite. Now he was rattling over the pavement of the streets; he would soon be at La Trinité. Suddenly he remembered that if he left the diligence at the next corner and took his way down that street and then the next to the left he would reach the prison quicker. His baggage would be all safe with the honest French people.

In a moment he had opened the crazy old door, balanced himself on the steps and jumped down on the pavement. People looked at him, but no one seemed to recognise him; he turned down the street and round the next corner, and saw the prison in front of him; he began to run. When he came to the gate the sentry didn't know him, but he went in at once.

"Le Colonel Caressa," he cried, and ran across the yard. As he got to the door of the lodge it opened; Suzanne was there, and he found himself kissing her wildly while she cried silently. Still

holding each other they went into the sitting-room and there he looked at her. She had altered greatly; she was much thinner, but one could see scarcely any change in her figure.

"Why didn't you come sooner?" she cried reproachfully. "The days have been so long. I thought you would never come, Jack!"

"I only got the one letter from you," he said. "This one, and I started at once."

"I wrote once a week," she said, "for the first two months. I was happy at first, and then after I knew how I was, I began to get frightened and sad and I wrote twice a week, but I never had an answer, not one. Have you seen uncle?"

"No," Jack replied. "I got down at the corner and came the short way; he'll miss me."

"No, no," she said, "he'll guess; he always believed you'd come."

"Have you told him?" said Jack.

She shook her head, "No, but I think he knows. He has gone to meet you in all his uniform, poor little uncle. He loves you, you know," she added wisely, nodding her head.

"And I him," said Jack. "Should I just run there or can you send?"

She smiled.

"You can send Chichet if you like," she said.

Jack went out bare-headed and called and at once Chichet skipped across the courtyard to meet him and after embracing him and kissing him on both cheeks started off at full speed to La Trinité to bring the Colonel while the little soldier at the gate stared in astonishment hardly able to make up his mind whether he had done right or wrong to neglect the *consigne*.

Jack returned to Suzanne and told her how often he had written and how he had failed to get an exchange, hoping to the last minute that it would be possible, and she nodded her head. Already she seemed different; life and hope had come into her eyes and face.

Then the door opened and the Colonel appeared with Chichet behind him. The Colonel looked very stern, his black moustaches were curled up defiantly; he had on his desperate air, but Jack went to him with outstretched arms.

"Petit père," he cried, and at once the Colonel threw his arms about him and began kissing him and hugging him, and shaking the tears from his eyes at the same time; and when the embracing was over and he felt ashamed of his tears he looked down and said:

"Cette sacrée cuisse me fait mal," and Jack

burst into laughter, while Chichet danced a sort of hornpipe at the door, and Suzanne said:

"I must just have a look at the servant; little uncle got her for me, but she's not a good cook and I want everything good to-day. Marie! Marie!"

CHAPTER V

SUZANNE'S affection and the old Colonel's joy at the meeting moved Jack intensely. After telling all his news and hearing all theirs, including a story of how Weetman had managed to get cognac into the prison by persuading the warder that it was the only thing with which English sailors cleaned their clothes, Jack turned quietly to the old Colonel:

"I came back before my time, Colonel, to marry Suzanne. Will you give her to me?"

The announcement brought about another great scene. The Colonel embraced Jack many times while Suzanne cried a little out of sheer happiness. Dr. Sauvan came in and heard the news and after sucking his upper lip for a moment, proposed to make the arrangements. Jack was astonished to hear from him that he would have to get his father's written consent to the wedding.

While waiting for this the old life went on as before. Jack even took up his fencing bouts with the Colonel and Chichet, and was delighted

to find that his skill seemed to have increased with his rest. But for some reason or other, though the life was the same and as pleasant as ever, Jack felt that everything had changed. Thinking over it at night a good simile occurred to him: he remembered one summer evening slipping out to sea in the old *Dolphin* under a jib with the mainsail half hoisted; as they slid past the little pier all the people on it seemed to be moving and Jack and the people about him on the deck were quite still; whereas, of course, Jack and the vessel were moving while the spectators were standing still. So now he found that his view of all these people, of Sauvan and Chichet and Caressa, and even of Suzanne herself had all altered mysteriously. Sauvan had seemed to him very reasonable and fair-minded. Jack was now struck by a peevish precision and pedantry in him. He was selfish and of light weight Jack felt; his philosopher had dwindled to an empty formalist. Chichet he saw was rather clever and self-seeking; when fencing he often let himself be pinked by the Colonel when he could easily have avoided it; he was always the first to notice and applaud any good stroke of the Governor or of Jack.

Suzanne and the little Colonel had altered least of all. Perhaps it was that Jack had known them

best before. Suzanne was so occupied with baby linen, so delighted at being able to talk of it all freely that she was just as vivid, quick-tempered and quick-tongued as she had been at first. She had long conferences with Marie, and Jack often heard her berating the servant, but she had a good heart and was as generous and forgiving as she was passionate; a true daughter of France.

When Jack told Caressa about his exchange he was delighted to find that it was no longer necessary; General Bonaparte had granted the little Colonel's request, and at the bottom of the curt official letter had written in his own hand: *Accordé—souvenir de Lodi. Bonaparte:* so Jack was free, and as peace negotiations were going on between the two countries it looked as if the rest of the British sailors would soon regain their liberty. Jack paid more than one visit to them and found they were all fairly well content though pining as only sailors can pine for perfect freedom. Gosport had gone thinner, while Weetman had grown much stouter. Both were glad to see Jack, and on hearing the news of Jack's engagement Gosport pressed him to ask the Colonel for their freedom. Jack promised to take the first opportunity of doing this.

His father's consent to the marriage came in

due course, accompanied by a very characteristic little letter:

"I wish you all luck," his father wrote, "but I cannot help thinking it would have been wiser of you to have stayed at home. You are too young to marry."

The words conjured up the whole scene and all the friends and interests Jack had in Hurstpoint. None of them drew him strongly except his father, and he didn't take much interest in anyone else except Margaret. What would she think when she heard the news? he wondered.

Meantime he slipped into the French life of the Governor's house with perfect comfort.

They were married at the Mairie one morning. Jack was astonished to find that the ceremony made no difference whatever to him. He lived openly now with Suzanne, and that was the only change; otherwise everything went on as before.

Almost immediately after the wedding time began to hang heavily on Jack's hands. He got the old Colonel to write a letter to Bonaparte telling of his daughter's marriage to an Englishman and praying that he might be allowed to send home a dozen English sailors whom his son-in-law represented as having people dependent on them. In a little while the petition came back

granted. It was Bonaparte's cue at the moment to show himself generous to the English, for he desired peace. But his wonderful memory and his even more astonishing personal kindness to all those connected with his early triumphs was proved to Jack by the words scrawled on the side:

"Rien pour toi-même? B.

The little Colonel put this carefully away with the uniform in which he had been wounded and talked more about his hero than ever. As Bonaparte rose to greater power and fame the Colonel's admiration of his benefactor grew into adoration.

When Jack took the news of their freedom to Gosport and Weetman he was surprised to find Gosport a little ungrateful, as he thought. Weetman was delighted to get back to Hurstpoint and the port-side public house, but Gosport seemed reluctant to go away, declared that there would be nothing for him to do without Jack, wanted to wait for him. At length Jack arranged for him to go to Pin's at Boulogne and there get into touch with Riding and send him all the home news he could.

After the English sailors left Jack got into the

habit of going nearly every afternoon to Sauvan's house either to borrow a book or to talk to the doctor about the one he had just been reading. In the course of three or four months he got through most of the French classics and a great many of the newer writers, particularly Rousseau and Madame de Stael. In Rousseau he found exquisite descriptions of natural scenery; it was as if nature's loveliness had been re-discovered about this time, so keen was the pleasure everyone took in St. Pierre's descriptions of tropical scenery and Rousseau's paintings of Swiss landscapes.

The direct teaching of these books too had a very real effect on Jack; their constant appeal to the reason was re-echoed in life in the most extraordinary way. People talked of abstract reason as a sort of final judge which all civilized persons must sooner or later acknowledge; a republican government seemed to them rational; to call everyone "citoyen" and "citoyenne" was nothing but a reasonable proof of equality, and this love of reason appeared to Jack hopeful and convincing. Every now and then, it is true, vague doubts came to him more as feelings than as thoughts.

Passing outside La Trinité one day he heard the choir chanting and went away wondering why the music of *adeste fideles* kept singing itself to

him freighted with an extraordinary appeal. Little problems too came up which reason didn't seem to solve satisfactorily. One incident that happened about this time helped to clear his mind.

A mother had left a child by a post while she went a few paces along the dockside to talk to her husband who was working on board a little schooner. The man went below to find something that his wife wanted and suddenly the baby-girl, who had crawled to the edge, tumbled into the water eight or ten feet below. Jack, who was passing, noticed that there were no steps within twenty yards and that probably the baby would sink if he didn't go to its rescue. He threw off his coat at once and jumped in beside it. When he came to the surface he held the baby up with one hand and swam with the other to the steps. The mother thanked him effusively, kissing his hands and crying out about his bravery. The father, too, seemed a good deal moved. Jack was delighted to get away from their gratitude into dry clothes.

That evening the woman came to the prison and told everything, and when she had gone away a great discussion arose. Sauvan declared that Jack had done wrong; he had no business to risk

his life, which was valuable to the state and perhaps to humanity, for the life of a little child. It was absurd; suppose he had been drowned, it would have been a bad action; he would have given away something valuable to the community for almost nothing. His duty was to try to save the baby from the dockside without risking his own life.

The little Colonel wouldn't have this reasoning at any price; a sailor or a soldier ought always to be ready, he thought, to throw away his life for humanity. It was a good example, and *"Sacré Bleu,* a good example is always worth a life."

The argument between the two protagonists got very warm. Sauvan began to sneer at irrational sentimentality and the little Colonel declared that only cowards were perfectly reasonable, and was rather inclined to think that perfectly reasonable men were all cowards, which led at length to Sauvan standing up and putting on his hat with offended dignity and silently taking his leave.

After he had gone the Colonel appealed to both Jack and Suzanne, and Jack was very well pleased to find that Suzanne was just as warm an admirer of what she called his heroism as even the little Colonel.

"Old Sauvan," she said, "reminds me of a

clock; he can tell you the exact time if ever anybody wants to know it, though it never did anyone any good to know it, but he can't make a single minute happier to anyone."

Thinking the matter over Jack came to the conclusion that the irrational view of the little Colonel and Suzanne pleased him better, seemed nearer right than the rational argument put forward so persistently by the doctor.

With the birth of the child, a little girl, Jack felt himself more and more at a loose end. Suzanne was completely taken up with the baby and the old Colonel seemed as devoted to his grandniece as the mother. Jack's active spirit began to demand work more and more imperiously.

About this time a letter came from Gosport telling Jack that there were new developments in the smugglers' camp, for peace negotiations were on foot and smuggling would, no doubt, increase extraordinarily as soon as peace was declared; he begged Jack to come at once and take a hand in the old game. Jack put it all before the Colonel and the Colonel felt too that it would be a good thing for Jack to get his fortune into his own hands and to increase it if possible. He encouraged him to go and see how the land lay, and

Suzanne hardly attempted to keep her husband at home. She, too, had seen Jack's impatient fretting and had felt that perhaps it would be better for him to get something to do. He was like a dog on the chain. His natural good temper was getting irritated by the enforced inaction. Before starting for Boulogne Jack promised Suzanne to come for her or send if he had to pass any considerable time in England.

He went straight to Pin's inn at Boulogne and found the conditions much as Gosport had stated them; peace was in the air and the smugglers had already increased in numbers. Riding came over in the first week and he agreed that as soon as peace was declared there would be a great opening for profitable dealing, for not only brandy but all French wines had gone up threefold and fourfold in price, and the first cargoes would fetch a fortune.

Naturally enough Chips' undertaking to build a brigantine faster than anything in the narrow seas came into Jack's mind. He found that both Gosport and Riding believed in Chips' capacity, and that Gosport had new ideas on the subject of a ship's speed; ideas won from American practice. He believed in broader ships than the English model, declaring that they had equal

stability and were therefore as fast in strong winds and far faster in light ones. Chips, he said, was the only man in England who agreed with him. He thought that if Chips were given a free hand he would produce an extraordinary vessel.

Jack resolved to consult his father and, after writing to his wife and the Colonel, he went on board the *Dolphin* with Gosport and was put across to Hurstpoint.

CHAPTER VI

IT is almost impossible to put the events of the next two or three years in any orderly and clear sequence. To Jack himself they always appeared a confused welter; there was no path across the waters. Life was dull to him for the first time; it had lost its intense zest; the purposes of it and the prizes all seemed paltry; he floated hither and thither like a water-logged ship sinking gradually lower and lower. Without confessing it to himself, he was tired of his marriage; he was very young and had in excess the faults of youth. He was quick, eager, daring, a lover of risks and adventures, content so long as life held ever-new excitement. In many ways marriage closed the door, limited the horizon. At every moment he was conscious of the change; girls spoke to him differently; were not so inclined to flirt with him. Men thought less of him, too; it was clear that he had fallen in public esteem. He resented the change, and the tie of marriage dragged on him beyond reason. He hated having

to say where he was going or where he had been; he was not a child he thought to be so schooled, and Suzanne was very suspicious and outspoken, and exceedingly jealous; she did not make the bond lighter, far from it; her very tenderness, the frankness of her abandon worked against her. Jack soon felt regret, and admitted to himself that Suzanne could be a mistress or a mother, but could never be a companion.

She expected him to be greatly interested in her clothes and hats, and in the way she took care of their child and the house. She seemed to be always looking for praise or for kisses and caressings, like a baby for lollipops, and he soon realised that her mind was a child-mind, utterly immature and complacently self-satisfied. He was surprised now and then to find that she had a certain interest in people and a quick feminine understanding of their faults and vanities; but he never guessed that a little encouragement from him would have set her trying to develop this power of comprehension with astonishing results.

Very soon after their marriage he asked himself how he could ever have imagined that he loved her; she was pretty, but that seemed so little now, and he could never talk to her, he groaned to himself; their *têtes-à-têtes* were either

passages of passion or a quarrel, and generally began in the one and ended in the other.

What he ought to have done hardly concerns us for the moment; what he did do is not very clear, for he seems to have thrown himself headlong into every distraction that offered in order to deaden thought and stifle regret.

As soon as he reached Hurstpoint he busied himself about the new vessel; he talked it all over with his father and Chips, and forthwith gave the shipwright the order to make a brigantine of about two hundred and fifty tons which Gosport was to arm. But the keel of the little clipper was hardly laid down when he had to return to Suzanne in France. She wrote him every day, and every week or so brought him a packet of her letters; she could not live without him; he must come back; and when he went back he found it was merely his presence she wanted. She had nothing to give him except herself, and it didn't enter her head to vary or enhance the gift.

In two or three months Jack was weary to yawning; he had to return to England, he said, to see how the vessel was going on; as soon as he was alone his spirits began to rise. On reaching Hurstpoint he found his father had married

Nancy, who seemed very happy, and was cheekier than ever.

After a week or two at the Inn, Jack noticed that his sister was getting very religious; she was going about a good deal with young Carrol and seemed to have forgotten Cecil Barron completely, perhaps because he had almost deserted the village for London.

Some time in the summer the brigantine was launched, and then rigged out and tuned up in cruise after cruise by Chips. There was no doubt that she was exceedingly fast, much faster even than the *Dolphin,* and for some weeks Jack took immense delight in getting everything into order on board and bringing his crew to the highest pitch of efficiency.

By this time Suzanne's letters were getting importunate again. His father thought he ought to bring her over, and after some time Jack resolved to do this because Suzanne wanted, she said, to meet his father and to see what English life was like.

When peace was made in the early part of the next year, Jack took The Grange, furnished as it was, and installed his wife there. From the beginning the experiment didn't turn out well. If Suzanne was lonely in France without her husband,

she was ten times as lonely at The Grange without anyone to talk to, and imprisoned, as she said, among people she couldn't understand. Emily did her best for her, it is true, for a little while; young Carrol came too and aired his French, but none of the county people ever called, and the poor girl spent the greater part of her time alone. Her baby, even, and Jack were not sufficient to fill up the void; she quickly became discontented and fell out of sorts. As ill luck would have it, the summer was dark and rainy and the sun seemed to show itself as rarely in June as it usually does in December.

Jack took his wife out for drives, but she didn't like the country; it was never gay, she said, never warm and bright; he took her to church, too, but the gentlefolk didn't appear to know them. His sister said they resented his marrying a French woman. Margaret Barron, it is true, bowed and smiled pleasantly, but Selwyn was with her and Selwyn didn't appear to see Jack and managed to keep Margaret to himself. Suzanne noticed Margaret's greeting, for, after she had reached home, she wanted to know who the perch-pole was who had bowed, and when Jack answered that Margaret was an old friend, she went

on to mimic her smile and caricature her dress till Jack stared at her spitefulness.

The crisis did not come at once, for in spite of domestic troubles the year held some good moments in it. As soon as peace was declared, Jack took the brigantine down to Bordeaux and returned with a large cargo of fine brandies and wines. The trade was highly profitable and very interesting as well, besides supplying Jack with excellent reasons for being away from home.

All this windy and rainy summer Suzanne was nearly deserted; she had no one to talk to except the maid, Marie, whom she had brought with her and her baby, and she pined for familiar talk and human companionship.

From the very first meeting Suzanne's dislike of England and the English seemed to concentrate itself on Margaret Barron. Jack often wondered at this intuitive enmity. Without intending it Suzanne kept his thoughts fixed on Margaret and he couldn't but contrast the two to Suzanne's disadvantage. If he was out late at the port or the Inn she was sure to ask him whether he had been with the eel; she never spoke of Margaret but in nick-names, and her jealousy annoyed Jack beyond reason, for it had no foundation at least for some time, and as it made the

house intolerable he took to spending a good deal of his spare time at the Inn.

One day he was going home from the port when Margaret came towards him from the road which led to the Rectory; he bowed to her and walked beside her. She wanted to see him, for she had just heard from Carrol that he was always in the Inn and drinking too much, and she felt annoyed with him, but she concealed this and asked him simply how he was getting on.

"I'm not getting anywhere," he confessed bitterly, "marking time or worse."

His hopelessness took away her anger and made her eager to help him.

"It was your wife I saw in church the other day, wasn't it?" she began. "Why don't you bring her up to The Court? Mother would be glad to see her, and I would try to make things pleasant for her, Jack?"

"It is very kind of you," he answered, "but she only speaks French and she's lonely here."

"That's natural enough," Margaret went on. "Do bring her up and let's try to make it pleasant for her. You've a little girl, haven't you?"

Jack nodded.

"You mustn't avoid your friends."

Jack retorted bitterly. "It is the friends avoid

us. Didn't you see at church how they all cut us?"

"You mustn't be hard on them," replied Margaret. "They don't know much French and they hate to appear ridiculous; that's the cause of their standoffishness, believe me. If your wife would begin to talk English they would call and try to help her."

Jack shook his head. "She won't; she hates the English and England, Margaret."

"You must be patient with her."

"I'm not patient," cried Jack. "I seem to have lost hope; life is finished for me. I have missed the way somehow."

His bitterness thrilled her, but her very sympathy made her even more direct than usual.

"The way doesn't lead to the Inn," she took heart to say.

"So the parson's been talking," cried Jack. "Damn him!"

"That's unfair of you," she broke in seriously. "Carrol thinks a great deal of you—we all do; you should justify our high opinion."

"If I could have a talk with you now and then," said Jack, "I would be able to go on, but I'm about as hopeless as a man can be, and I'm not worth spending talk upon."

Margaret looked at him: "I nearly always

go down to the vicarage on Tuesdays and Thursdays and return home about six; if you cared you could walk a part of the way with me—as far as the forked roads," she added, "where our ways separate."

The last words made Jack wince, but he thanked her and took her at her word.

The news soon got about the village that Jack Morgan and Miss Barron were always meeting and walking together; the walks were innocent enough, though both Margaret and Jack delighted in them. The intellectual likeness between them made the unlikenesses interesting. Since their first meeting at The Court, Margaret had always been ready to receive new impressions from him—was indeed always in a state of expectancy, while Jack realised that he was strangely eager for her praise, and intensely pleased with it, for she only gave it when it was extorted by some real quality. Of late, this intellectual sympathy was curiously quickened; Jack's hopeless position called forth all Margaret's sympathy and her kindness intensified his sensuality: the bodily attraction between them became insistent. Margaret was infinitely desirable to Jack; the mere sight of her thrilled and excited him, and she was just as conscious of the deeper interest she felt in him. She was an-

noyed with herself indeed for the obsession of the feeling; it was a sort of angry curiosity in her that made her turn Carrol's talk or his sister's talk always to Jack and his married life, and when one told her of his drinking and the other of his unhappiness she tried to be indifferent or impartial, but in herself was deliciously fluttered and flattered.

Every meeting seemed to weave fresh bonds between them. Jack found that telling Margaret all that he had seen and done made everything clearer to him, and in the same way he brought French life before her just as vividly by his reports of what he had witnessed and heard. His exciting stories and experiences had a singular attraction for her; the very danger of the life he had led interested her enormously. They both felt that the time spent together was always too short.

One day as they stood talking at the forked roads before separating, Suzanne saw them; she had come out after putting the baby to bed, hoping to meet Jack, and as she walked round the bend in the road she saw him talking with the woman she most disliked. Suzanne stopped short; she didn't know what to do, but she wanted to see on what terms they would part. "He's in love with

that tall beast," she cried to herself in fear and anger, and the next moment she had slipped through a gate and was watching the pair from behind the hedge, ducking down as soon as either of them cast a glance in her direction.

To her mortification and rage she had nearly half an hour to wait. When they parted it was merely with a hand clasp and a bow. Margaret did not turn once to look after him Suzanne noticed. "Cold and stuck up," she said to herself. "What does he see in her?" she asked in bitterness of heart.

Jack came down the road towards her with his head bent as if in reflection.

Suzanne thought of surprising him and then concluded it would be best to follow him home and to say nothing about the occurrence in order to learn more, but when she got into the house and found him lost in a book she could not change her anger to indifference in a moment or conceal her temper.

"What is the matter?" he asked at length in French.

"You know very well," she replied sullenly, looking at him with hurt, hating eyes.

"I do not," he replied carelessly. He had persuaded himself that his meetings with Margaret

were mere talks; he hadn't even kissed her hand.

"She must be a pretty creature," cried Suzanne, "that English girl who makes love to a married man."

"I don't know whom you mean," Jack replied. "There's no girl making love to me."

"I saw you at the corner," cried Suzanne, "talking to the 'perchpole,' " and she mimicked Margaret's way of holding herself. "I suppose she was your mistress before you married me?"

Jack revolted, "You mustn't say such things."

"I'll say what I like," cried Suzanne, "and it's true; anyone can see it; she's in love with you and follows you to your own door, the slut!"

Jack got up and went out of the house. When he returned it was nightfall, but Suzanne's anger, which had died down in his absence, flamed up again at his silence and set face.

"I want to go back home," she said the moment he entered the room. "I can't live in this beastly country or with you. You leave me alone all day to go about with another woman and when you return, you sit silent or you read; it is enough to drive one mad. I have no one to talk to—I am so unhappy," and she choked.

Jack took her in his arms and tried to persuade her that her suspicions were imaginary, but as

soon as he mentioned Margaret she flamed again; she would not hear of her. If Jack could have persuaded himself to speak against Margaret or to speak contemptuously of her, Suzanne would have forgiven him, but the thought of doing so didn't enter his head; he kept Margaret resolutely out of the petty squabble; he wouldn't have her degraded with vile names, and Suzanne felt his reticence and raged against it.

"I'll go home," she cried. "I hate the English and their country. I and my baby will die if we stay here. Why can't you take me back? You don't want me. . . ."

She raged and begged till he promised to do her will.

Of course he thought that next day it would all blow over and be forgotten, and on the morrow Suzanne said nothing about returning. But a few days later Jack stopped at the port till it was dark, and when he got back home he found Suzanne raging and more discontented than ever. The lonely house she declared frightened her to death: there were noises in it; she'd had Marie to sit with her the whole evening; the drip, drip of the rain terrified her.

Again and again she declared he must take her home; she would die if confined any longer in the

wretched village where there was no one to talk to, nothing to see, and where it did nothing but rain all day long.

And worse was to come. Suzanne could never get that meeting between Margaret and Jack out of her head; she talked to Marie about it, and set her to watch. They soon discovered the days of meeting, and at length Suzanne made up her mind to shame her rival.

Since the first scene with Suzanne, Jack was conscious of his love for Margaret and though he would not admit it to himself, the desire to know whether she cared for him in return, as Suzanne had said, became almost irresistible.

One day he met her when he was in a very despairing mood. "There is nothing to do," he cried, as they stood at the parting of the ways. "Nothing! No way of escape for me. Sometimes I think I shall go mad. Meeting you like this is torture."

Margaret's eyes dwelt on him:

"What can I do?" she asked simply.

"Say that you care, too," he said. "That would ease the pain, make me less miserable." He caught her hand and kissed it.

Before she could reply Suzanne pushed her way through the hedge screaming in French:

"Kiss her mouth! That's what she wants, the English girl; don't mind me. I'm nobody; only your wife!"

Jack turned to her.

"Hush! Hush! for God's sake."

But Margaret went in front of him:

"I'm sorry," she said in French. "I should not have let him, but it is the first time. You believe me?" she added proudly, holding out her hand to Suzanne as she spoke.

"I believe nothing," cried Suzanne. "You meet my husband day after day and you kiss him. You shall not! You shall not. Get a man of your own, can't you? but leave my husband alone: he doesn't want you: no one does."

Margaret retorted: "I told him to marry you: if I hadn't——" and she broke off flushing.

The taunt and her proud self-restraint combined drove Suzanne wild:

"You told him," she shouted in French; "you wanted a change, eh? and now you want him again——"

"I'm sorry," interrupted Margaret, "but you're unjust——"

"Take him," screamed Suzanne, "take him, I leave him to you——" and she rushed away in a fury.

Margaret had turned, too, and gone her way.

Jack went slowly back to The Grange after Suzanne. He did not reproach her: he felt that it was all ended; that Margaret would not meet him any more, and that conviction drove all other thoughts out of his head; he was cold with misery.

His silence exasperated Suzanne. Next day she declared that, if Jack would not take her home, she'd go by herself.

She was so cool, so determined, that at length Jack took her back to Cherbourg and spent some little time there with her and the Colonel.

Before the end of the year he was as tired of Cherbourg as his wife had been tired of Hurstpoint; he ached with longing for the free adventurous life, and made the long, dark nights the excuse for getting back to what he called "his work." Suzanne hardly objected; the loneliness of her life at Hurstpoint and her jealousy of Margaret had estranged her from her husband; almost killed her little vain affection. No doubt Jack could easily have won her again had he so willed, but he could not live the ordinary life with her in Cherbourg; his mind seemed to stagnate in it.

Jack returned to England like a schoolboy who gets out into the open after a long punish-

ment. He shut up The Grange and on his short visits to Hurstpoint put up at the Inn and resumed his life at the point where his marriage had broken it off.

When an active mind is deprived of play and exercise, the tedium of living soon becomes insupportable; no bodily pleasure makes up for the lack of mental stimulus; the intellect, too, will have what is necessary to its growth; a plant will thrust aside paving stones to reach up to the light.

* * * * * * *

There were many reasons why smuggling after the peace of Amiens was more successful than it had ever been before. As might have been expected the desire for French wines and brandies had steadily increased all through the years of war when the demand had been far greater than the supply. With peace the trade became extremely profitable; and the activity of the preventive officers didn't increase in like measure. Indeed, the whole service on the English side wanted reorganization. The inhabitants of the seacoast everywhere were against the Customs officers and men and gave them no information; the force was not only undermanned but unpopular. Jack found it easy to run cargo after

cargo all through the winter. Putting up at the Inn as he did in the intervals of his cruises he began to drink, as men of that day drank, a great deal more than was good for him and the habit of successful command made his manners rather imperious.

About this time he deteriorated rapidly. He had resented the coldness which the gentry had shown him on his marriage. Now finding himself isolated in the village he was inclined out of a spirit of antagonism to exaggerate the differences of opinion which rendered him unpopular. In the Inn parlour he was continually meeting gentlemen to whom Bonaparte was a sort of ogre and he amused himself by picturing him as a hero. Nine out of ten Englishmen regarded everything French with disgust, and Jack took pleasure in showing them how mistaken they were. It was fortunate for him that he was only in the Inn for short periods of time, just sufficient to dispose of the cargo and get the brig ready for another cruise; otherwise his presence in the Inn must have led to frequent quarrels.

On one occasion he almost came to blows with Crosby; another time he made fun of Myring and turned the big Lieutenant into an enemy.

One evening, as ill luck would have it, half a

dozen gentlemen were in the Inn when Selwyn came in with the news that war was imminent. He used the opportunity to goad Jack with quiet sarcasm and hardly concealed contempt. The truth was he was suffering himself, for he had just been refused by Margaret, and he couldn't help trying to score off Jack.

"We shall now see," he said, "whether your hero Buonaparte is able to beat the one-armed Nelson. I believe we shall soon hear of another battle of the Nile."

Jack was nothing loth to take up the argument. "What could Bonaparte do," he said, "but declare war when the English promised to give up Malta and then refused to do it? It is difficult not to fight with people who break their word. But perhaps Mr. Selwyn would defend broken promises."

The word exasperated Selwyn, who considered that Margaret had broken an implied promise to him, and in reply he sneered at Bonaparte as the champion liar of the age.

The wordy dispute went on till Selwyn declared it was a pity that Jack had no right to wear a sword: and Jack replied that it seemed to him the majority of the people who had a right to wear swords were glad of any excuse not to use them. Selwyn grew very pale at this insult,

and spoke aside to Nugent and Myring, and then all three got up and left the room. For some weeks after this Jack had the Inn almost entirely to himself: the officers avoided it and even Crosby appeared rarely. One day Jack, on his way to the port, met Colonel Nugent face to face, and was astonished by the scarcely perceptible contemptuous nod he received in return for his greeting: he couldn't help talking to Riding about it when he met him five minutes afterward, and Riding gave him the key to the general coldness. "Selwyn," he said, "on the matter of the dispute, put himself in the hands of Nugent and Myring, declaring he was perfectly willing to meet you with swords or pistols, as they might choose, if they regarded you as a gentleman. The two officers, not being very friendly to you, declared a duel impossible, said that you couldn't even find a gentleman to second you, that you had no right to carry a sword at all, or to pretend equality with gentlefolk. You were received by the Barrons because in war class distinctions were apt to be relaxed, but really it was too much to ask them to accept a publican's son as an equal. They both declared that Selwyn was quite right to treat your insult with disdain: it was the only thing to do.

For themselves they would in future have as little to do with you as possible."

The decision was soon put about, and Jack felt a lowering of temperature, so to speak, which was distinctly unpleasant.

Mr. Carrol even lent an avowable reason to general sentiment by preaching a sermon against French atheism and revolutionary dogmas which did Jack a good deal of harm in public esteem.

A day or two afterwards he saw Margaret near the village, but she hurried past without stopping, giving him a little embarrassed bow, and at once he felt himself despised and deserted. He could do nothing but press on the preparations on board the brigantine, and then return to the Inn to drink.

Margaret's coldness was inexplicable to him, and intensely painful: it came to him as a blow from the one person he trusted, and it came at a moment when he was least able to bear it. He had grown accustomed to live from meeting to meeting with her; he had nothing else in his life but this brief occasional joy, and now he recognised with aching heart that it, too, was not to be reckoned upon. The pain of the disappointment taught him that he was deeply in love with her, and this love was different from any other he had

known, not in degree merely, but in kind; it frightened him even to think of losing it: he could not face the pain, the drear loneliness of life without her companionship: he was ready to do anything, he said to himself, to suffer anything but not that dead blank.

The realisation of the precarious slightness of the tie between them, the dread lest the delightful intercourse and intimacy should have ended altogether, hastened the growth of his love to overpowering passion. For just as it is the wind threatening to uproot the tree which forces it to drive its roots deeper and spread them more widely, so the dangers that menace the existence of love give it greater strength and holding power.

After brooding and drinking for some time, Jack made up his mind to see Margaret as soon as possible, and have a definite explanation with her; but his heart knew that he meant to make a last appeal to her. As soon as the resolution was taken, his spirits rose: he was too young, too vigorous to believe in disaster. Strong characters are usually the most constant and the easiest to persuade themselves of constancy in others.

The cause of the change in Margaret was not far to seek. Selwyn was a favourite of Lady

Barron: a man of property and fashion, she said to herself, of handsome person to boot: a lover any woman would be proud of. Again and again she had detailed his advantages to Margaret. Lady Barron had hardly an inkling of any love that did not gratify vanity: but her constant praising of Selwyn had less than no effect on her daughter, who was of deeper and richer temperament, and as much given to enthusiasms as her mother to vanities.

From girlhood Margaret had made a sort of hero of Jack. When he came to The Court as a man, his originality of dress and manner, of speech and thought woke her admiration again. It flattered her to feel that she was like him in mind and character: indeed, the only person able to understand and sympathise with him; his singularity was as dear to her as her own: she hugged herself with the belief that they were unlike any other pair in the world.

The shock of hearing of his intimacy with Suzanne almost made her betray herself: the disappointment, the necessity for concealing what she felt, something honest and proud in her, too, made her advise Jack to be constant to Suzanne: But when she heard of his marriage, she blamed herself and her youthful generosity bitterly: at

heart she felt nothing but disdain for the girl who could marry a man who didn't love her, but her contempt for Suzanne only deepened her pity for Jack. She thought of her feeling for him as pity and intellectual comprehension. She chose to hide even from herself the true nature of her emotion, but the thwarting opposition of her mother and her friends brought her to self-realisation.

After Selwyn had been rejected by Margaret, he went to Lady Barron to take his leave, and, expanding under her flatteries, he confided to her that he had asked Margaret to be his wife and she had refused him. Lady Barron was so sympathetic that he could not help putting "a spoke," as he termed it to himself "in his rival's wheel." He told Lady Barron that Margaret and Jack were always meeting, and the village folk were talking. He didn't mean to suggest that Margaret was in love with a man so far beneath her: but the fellow was glib, and Margaret was very young, and a firm hand was needed or else. . . .

Selwyn went away congratulating himself on having made Jack's path difficult, if not impossible: he had, in fact, made it easier.

As soon as he left her, Lady Barron sent for Margaret and gave her what she called "a good

talking to." She was, indeed, both surprised and indignant that her child could hesitate for a moment between Selwyn and Morgan, and the fact that Morgan was married enabled her to point her remonstrance with contemptuous sarcasms that made Margaret wince and rage. She ended by saying that Margaret must promise not to meet Morgan any more. Margaret refused point blank: she would not give up her friend because fools like Selwyn imagined evil in friendly talks.

When pressed and tormented, she admitted that she liked Jack, liked him greatly, which confession brought her mother to exasperation and a flood of tears: she was deserted in life; her husband ill and unable to help her; her daughter running after a married man, who wasn't even a gentleman, and so forth and so on interminably.

The whole scene seemed to Margaret degrading; to put an end to it she gave in to the extent of saying she would treat Jack more coldly, would not make meetings with him, and would give no reason for scandalous gossip.

Lady Barron had sense enough to be content with this assurance, and the first fruit of it was that Margaret hurried past Jack with a preternaturally cold greeting, for she was afraid, if she heard his voice, it would be impossible to keep

her promise to her mother. As it was, the first effort to keep it flushed her face with anger and passionate revolt against the conventionalities and affectations which encaged her.

She understood at once that to miss the walks and talks with Jack would be very hard to bear: they had meant so much to her in every way that she could not contemplate the dullness of daily life unrelieved by the hope of seeing and speaking to him. She hoped he would not notice her coldness, or at least would pay no attention to it, and would force a meeting. She intended to keep to the strict letter of her promise, but if she met Jack by chance she resolved to tell him everything. She couldn't lose him utterly; that was not to be thought of. The knowledge that he had never even kissed her made her revolt reasonable to her: her life must not be hurt and maimed by evil-minded, prejudiced busy-bodies.

CHAPTER VII

JACK had begun to drink. At first on rare occasions, after getting wet through on deck, or when chilled by half a night passed in an open boat. Almost insensibly the occasions became more numerous till it grew to be a custom with him to drink as freely as Knight or Gosport drank. In the year after his marriage, the year spent in smuggling, he took to drinking more: little by little he had got a taste for it: he liked good French Bordeaux with his meals; he enjoyed a glass of brandy afterwards.

Once in Bordeaux and once in the Inn he had drunk a good deal, and discovered that he could drink more than most men without being drunk. This flattered the petty vanity in him: and now that his larger vanities and ambitions were hemmed in and deprived of outlet, this smaller conceit had disproportionate influence: he was proud of being able to take a great deal too much without being drunk. Usually now he had three or four nightcaps, as they were called, in the Inn

parlor before he went to bed, and often he drank freely at dinner and even earlier in the day.

Crosby and Myring had resumed the habit of visiting the bar nearly every evening, and Nugent often dropped in as well: about half-past ten or eleven o'clock his father and Nancy used to come in and they would end up with a couple of drinks all round while listening to a song by Weetman or to a new story, or tidbit of scandal.

Crosby was in some respects an amusing companion: he had a great fund of loose anecdotes, which he told with a good deal of spirit; and some of them had a bitter humour or a tang of reality which pinned them to the memory.

One afternoon Jack noticed Crosby whispering to Nancy in the bar. It came to him as an afterthought that the couple seemed confidential; but he put it out of his head easily enough, for Crosby had never shown himself in better spirits than on that occasion. He began by telling two or three stories which are unprintable, but which brought his audience into the right humour to appreciate anything he might say; and then he related what he called "a personal experience."

Two women, it appeared, had been quarrelling down at the port as he passed, one had a little girl of about seven years old at her side. With

arms akimbo the pair of viragoes barked at each other in the first round, so to speak, without mentioning names. Suddenly the woman without the child spoke directly to the other woman:

"Ye think a lot of yourself, Mrs. Jones," she cried, and proceeded to pour out a flood of reproaches. The little girl plucked her mother by the apron, and with her small face white with hatred cried:

"Call her a b— cow, mother, before she has time to call you it."

The humour of the thing made the little incident unforgettable to Jack.

Suddenly he heard Nugent and Crosby talking of Miss Barron.

"She's made a sensation at Court," Nugent said in some surprise; "it appears she's a great amateur actress, has been taken up by Lady Salisbury, and is one of the Pic Nics. I hear she's going to marry my Lord Mandeville."

At once Jack grew cold as ice.

"That's an old story," Crosby broke in, "Selwyn swore they were engaged a month ago: Mandeville's mad after her."

"It's a great match for her," said Myring pompously, "we all know the property is heavily

dipped: young Cecil can't keep away from the 'bones.' "

"He's so vain," explained Crosby, "if you flatter him, you can do anything with him."

"I met him the other day," Nugent went on, "in St. James's Street, rather white and shakey, but as nice looking as ever and very pleasant mannered, poor devil."

"How'll he get the money," said Crosby, "to pay these last losses? He told me when he was last at The Court that he had nothing left except the hope of a marriage, and heiresses aren't plentiful in these war times."

"I heard," said Nugent, "that Mandeville had promised to pay all his debts when he marries Margaret, and young Cecil is doing his best to bring the marriage off quickly."

"To play my lady will just suit her," flung out Crosby, "she's as proud as Lucifer."

Jack sat as if rooted to the settle: every word they said was printed in his brain. He was filled with sick fear; the news was probable, and his next emotion was absolute astonishment that the fact had such an effect upon him. Next moment he was flooded with hot rage. It was like Cecil's vain weakness, he felt, to have thrown his money away and then wish to save himself by selling his

sister. Why did she let herself get talked about with Mandeville? But it was all his own fault, he reflected sadly: why did he get married! Now it was too late. Why shouldn't she flirt with Mandeville, or anyone else she liked?

Suddenly he remembered that he had been sent for by his father to come to the Inn that night. He had been working all day to get the brigantine ready for sea, and the message was that someone wanted to see him about crossing to France. He didn't care where he went so long as he could go away at once.

His rage of jealousy was so maddening, his pain at the thought of Margaret's marriage so extraordinarily acute, he could not sit still: he got up as if to go out. He was afraid he'd betray himself if he stayed any longer. But in the nick of time Crosby called to him:

"What are you running away for, master Jack?"

"Running away!" he turned on him: he hated the great fat fellow with his sneering face.

"I'm tired of sitting over one cup for an hour," he retorted, "if you'll drink I'll drink with you; if not, I'll go to bed."

"Drink!" cried Crosby, "I could drink you under the table in an hour if you'd drink fair."

"I'll back you, Crosby," cried Nugent, "at wine or anything else. Who is to call the drinks?"

"Crosby can," said Jack. "I'll drink anything."

"Let's begin with a couple of bottles of claret, and let the loser pay," cried Crosby, "tho' already I'm more than a bottle ahead of you."

The first bottles were poured down very quickly; and then Crosby chose brandy and later punch; and all the time, instead of getting hotter or more excited, Jack got colder and colder and more miserable. The pain seemed to grow in him: his heart was like lead; and he noticed everything that took place with preternatural clearness. He saw that the moment they came to the brandy Nugent began managing himself, making one glass do for two or three; and when Crosby shouted for punch Nugent remained with a single rummer before him, which he hardly sipped.

Meanwhile Crosby gave reins to his dislike of Jack.

"Your wife'll get angry with you," he began, "if she knows you're drinking."

Jack didn't trouble even to answer.

A little later he pointed to a splash of wine on the table near Jack:

"You'll want one of your French hand-cloths soon for your own mouth," he said.

"It would take more than a hand-cloth to clean yours."

Again and again the antagonism between the two threatened to break into acts, but some word of Nugent's or the entrance of the pot-boy with fresh drinks changed the current of feeling. As he became more excited, Crosby's hatred of Jack found irritating expression:

"Let's drink to the King, damme!" he cried, with flaming red face, "and to hell with Boney and his frog-eaters."

For some reason or other the words showed Jack the bestiality of the whole contest: such wagers were always regarded as ordinary amusement, but his instinct revolted; he had already drunk enough, too much indeed: he would seize the pretext and cut the whole affair.

"Toasts weren't in the bargain," he replied, "and I won't drink them."

"You are afraid you'll be beaten," cried Crosby, "or else you are a traitor, by God. Every true Englishman would drink that toast."

"I won't," replied Jack, "and I have drunk enough." And he got up to go.

"If you don't stay and drink it out," roared Crosby, "you're a coward and beaten."

"That's right," cried Myring, "drink it out, by God, no true Englishman runs away."

"Here's hell to all cowards," cried Crosby, getting up and waving his glass above his head in the air, and distributing its contents impartially over the table and Nugent, who was seated next him.

Jack laughed. Crosby's insult didn't even excite his anger. As he left the room his own misery came over him in a wave: he felt so wretched that everything else faded from his mind. He didn't even dare to think of the cause of his heartache.

He went out in the air. In half an hour he came back to the Inn again, and found the whole place in disorder.

Crosby, it appeared, in his exultation had drunk rummer after rummer of punch to Jack's defeat, and had finally succumbed. He had fallen back in his chair, and from the chair to the ground, and Nugent and Myring had called in the pot-boy. Though both of them could stand, they were too drunk to do much but offer advice; but as Jack passed the door, the pot-boy had loosened Crosby's cravat, and flung the window open. The cold air finished what the punch had begun. In

two minutes Crosby was carried upstairs and thrown on a bed: and Jack went out again.

Had he drunk much? He didn't know: he was as sober as ever he had been in his life. Was she really going to be married? He pictured her as she had come towards him at The Court, with frank liking and eyes that held his. He must not think of it, or he'd scream with pain. What could he do to get away from the torturing thoughts? . . . . What was in his memory? Someone had wanted to see him: Who? He would see him now: anything rather than think. He turned and went back to the Inn. Where was his father? Had he gone to bed?

"Who wanted me?" he asked Nancy, who was shutting up.

"Two gentlemen from London who have number Four sitting-room," she said; "they sent down an hour ago, but you wouldn't listen."

"I'll go now," said Jack, "if you'll give me a quart of hot water to drink first."

"You'd better go to bed," she rejoined, "you look as if you were going to be ill; but you can have all the hot water you want"; and she poured him out a jugful from the kettle and set it before him.

"I'm all right now," he said, a moment or two

later, and, in fact, the long drink of hot water calmed his nerves and cleared his thoughts in an incredible way. "What did the men want?" he asked Nancy; "can you tell me?"

"They want to cross to France early in the morning," she replied.

"That's it, is it," cried Jack, "but why don't they go by Dover?"

"Ask them," Nancy flung back.

Jack went upstairs and knocked at the door.

"Come in," he heard.

Two men were seated before the fire and behind them a table covered with glasses and bottles. A young man dressed in the extreme of fashion turned to the door as Jack entered: the other, a very fat man, went on talking as if to himself rather than to his companion.

"I want to see Paris with my own eyes and Bonaparte, and find out whether Burke was right or not. . . . It's a mad world, but it looks to me as if the French had done right in getting rid of king and nobles. Who's that?" he cried, hearing Jack speak, and starting round in his chair to look at him.

Jack was caught at once by the air of careless authority in the man's speech and manner. He was very fat and red-faced, with a Jewish cast of

countenance—a thick, beaked nose and heavy pursed lips. He was very ill-dressed; his cravat untied and dirty, his shirt dirty, too; his fat heavy jowl blue-black and bristly: yet somehow or other the eyes redeemed the face; they were dark and not over large; but full of life, lambent, and the strong, rich voice stirred one like the eyes.

"Who are you?" he cried again, "and what d'ye want?"

"They tell me," said Jack, "you want to get to France in the morning. I suppose you'll go to Dover. There's a fast schooner starts at nine, will take you across probably by the afternoon."

"Don't want to go by Dover," cried the fat man, "want to go from here. There are boats, I suppose?"

"Not many," said Jack.

"One'll do; we want to cross to-morrow."

"That's a question of money," replied Jack.

"By God," cried the fat man, laughing heartily: "most things are a question of money, and it isn't as common with me now as it used to be before I went to the Jews. Do you remember, Holland," he cried to his companion, "when I used to call my ante-room Jerusalem Chamber? Great race, the Jews," he laughed, as if talking to himself; "they've invented bookkeeping by

double entry, and, not content with cheating us in this world, they reckon to cheat God in the next, having brought him in a debtor to them for everlasting bliss. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

His voice was so rich, his laughter so infectious, the humour of his lightning-quick speech so taking that Jack laughed, too; in spite of his heavy heart he had never been more interested: the man must be someone of importance he felt sure; for speech transformed him; no one could help feeling his charm.

"How much d'ye want to ferry us over?" he cried suddenly.

"Nothing, if you'll start now," returned Jack, "for I want to go; ten pounds apiece if you wait till the morning."

"What are you in such a devil of a hurry for?" asked the fat man, lazily.

"That's my business."

"Come, come," said the other, "let's have a punch and tell us why you want to start to-night."

"I've nothing to tell, and I've drunk all I want to drink."

For the first time the younger man interfered in the conversation:

"Is it quite safe, do you think, to go to France in these days?" he questioned Jack.

"As safe as London," replied Jack, "safer, in my opinion."

"H'm," said the exquisite, "the revolutionary spirit hasn't died out completely, we're told."

"It will not die out for many a year to come," said Jack, "thank God."

"You know France then?" cried the fat man, looking at him in surprise.

"A little of it."

"You speak French?"

"At your service," said Jack, using the French idiom.

"Who the devil are you?" cried the fat man, starting up in his chair, "you sympathise with the revolutionary spirit and yet are English; aren't you?"

"I'm the son of the Inn-keeper," replied Jack, "but I have been a good deal in France, and know it pretty well."

"And like it, too, it seems?"

"Very much," replied Jack.

"You're one in ten thousand then," cried the fat man, "and we must have a talk, by God: Here, Holland, you go off to bed," he flung out, "while I sit and talk to young—what's yer name?"

He was so genial that there was no hint of rudeness in his off-hand manner: one felt that he

had never used self-restraint, had always been allowed a large liberty.

Nothing loth, his companion lit a candle, and with a "Good-night, Charles," left the room.

"Now sit down," cried the fat man, "pour yourself out some wine, and tell me what you know of France. You don't wear the *bonnet rouge* yourself—eh?"

"No," said Jack, "I don't need to; but the red cap in France means better times for the poor."

"Freedom, eh?" questioned the man.

"Not freedom but equality," Jack replied.

"Now what the deuce do you mean by equality? A whoreson strange wild fowl that," cried the fat man, laughing.

"I mean," said Jack, "that thousands of people are now getting the land of France for themselves, the land which a few nobles used to hold."

The fat man's eyes narrowed in thought as he looked at him.

"I see, I see," he said, slowly, "and you think that a good thing?"

"Surely," replied Jack, "it's better to raise corn than game, and men and women instead of servants."

"By God!" cried the fat man, "you're a philosopher, my young friend!"

"No," said Jack, thinking of Sauvan, "but I've talked to some who can think."

"And what do you make of Bonaparte?" questioned the fat man.

"I don't know much about him," Jack replied, "but the Governor of the prison where I was thinks him the greatest man that ever lived; and he certainly never forgets the men who fought with him in the beginning of his career."

"A weak trait but a good 'un," cried the fat man: "the best I've ever heard about him; but he doesn't care much for your equality, it seems. He says the French don't want liberty or equality; but honour and glory. Have you heard of this new Order he has just established?"

Jack shook his head.

"You know," said the fat man, "that all the Orders which used to be in France were abolished with the titles of nobility; but now Bonaparte has invented one that he calls the Order of the Legion of Honour: it's the latest news in Town! . . . Every Frenchman is mad to get it, it seems. Men will do more for a bit of ribbon," he added, as if talking to himself, "or a title, than they will for money. I wonder sometimes why we don't use honour more as a reward for extraordinary service."

He seemed to have forgotten that Jack was in the room: "I've often thought we should, and now this Bonaparte does it—an able man, probably."

"But who are you," cried Jack, "who know more about France than I do, though I was in it last week?"

The man with the authoritative, laughing eyes paused: "My name's Fox," he said, with a sort of careless aloofness.

"Charles James Fox?" cried Jack.

"The same, if it pleases you."

"I've always wanted to meet you," cried Jack, "I'm glad even to see you: I've heard much of you."

"Nothing good, I'm afraid," said Mr. Fox, in an offhand way.

"Much," said Jack, "in the Westminster Election you declared that we had no earthly reason to fight France, and no right. You love France and hate war and wouldn't have anything to do with the Ministers who were making it."

"Simple truths," replied Mr. Fox, yawning; but Jack noticed that his eyes now were wary—"simple truths—always unacceptable. . . . ."

Seeing the question in Jack's face, he went on: "Florid fictions are what the majority of men

love. But you'll keep my secret, won't you? Not tell my name, I mean, to anyone, for Lord Holland, my companion, thinks that if we're known, there may be some unpleasantness."

"It looks," he continued, with the careless confidence of one who has never had to mince his words, "as if we should have war again shortly, and I want to see for myself what the state of France is: I used to know Paris pretty well."

"I know nothing about Paris," said Jack, "but you'll find France greatly improved. The country is getting very prosperous: there is a new spirit everywhere; men are better off than they ever were before; there's happiness and hope in the very air."

"Really," cried Mr. Fox, "that's news, indeed. How have they taken their defeats by us on the seas?"

"They don't think of them," replied Jack, "they have so many triumphs on land," he added, "to put against them."

"That seems natural," cried Mr. Fox. "You've got a pair of eyes in your head, my young friend, and have used them to good purpose.

"But we can have another talk to-morrow," he added, and with that he got up, yawning, and began busying himself with his candle.

Jack took it as a hint that he was to go.

"Good-night," he said, as he went to the door, "I hope you will sleep well."

"Good-night, good-night," Mr. Fox threw back carelessly, "we'll start after dinner, if that suits you."

"I will suit myself to your pleasure," said Jack, respectfully, for this man, he felt, deserved respect. "Good-night," again he added, as he went down the stairs.

But even before he had reached his own bedroom he became conscious again of the sick pain, the uneasy fear at his heart. He went into his room and sat down by the bed. He noticed now that his head was throbbing, his eyes burning, his mouth afire. He went over to the water jug and drained it. . . .

He felt tired to death, unutterably depressed: what a mess he had made of his life. Why had he got into that intrigue with Suzanne? His father was right, he should never have married her. Married her—was he married? What was she to him? He saw quite clearly now that he cared more for Caressa than for his niece; that it was to spare Caressa pain that he had married. He laughed aloud: who would ever believe it? . . . .

He had wrecked his whole life simply to avoid hurting a friend. Was his father right? Might he have married Margaret? Hope crept into him. Why not? Perhaps. . . . Then the sick fear again. My Lord Mandeville! Damn my Lord. . . .

So that was Fox; the first man in England, even in Opposition; a bold, genial man.

He had always heard of him as a great dandy: in his retirement Fox had gone to the other extreme: his hands were filthy, his cravat frayed; his face could not have been shaved for a week; grotesquely fat, too; yet there was power in him. But beyond an easy air of authority Jack felt, with a certain exhilaration, that the famous statesman was not much his superior. He had a careless, off-hand air as of one accustomed to be flattered and obeyed. But he had said nothing extraordinary. An able man, yes: fine voice, fine eyes. . . .

Again he began to feel his head throbbing, and now he determined to be at his best to-morrow to meet Mr. Fox, so he went downstairs to the kitchen, poured himself out a gallon of nearly boiling water which he brought upstairs and began to drink while undressing. As he got into the bed sweating hot the alcohol had its way and he fell into heavy sleep.

CHAPTER VIII

THANKS to his youth and the state of excitement he had been in, and perhaps a little to his hot water cure, Jack woke with nothing but a slight swimming in his head, which left him as soon as he got into the open air.

Though the miserable feeling of depression and remorse lay heavy upon him, still he put aside his self-reproachings for the time being and busied himself with the preparations for departure. Lord Holland was down early and saw that the baggage was all handed over to Jack to be taken on board the *Dolphin*. But Mr. Fox didn't make his appearance till nearly two o'clock, and then he sat down to an enormous dinner and a couple of bottles of the best Burgundy in the cellar. He was not fat without good reason. He never showed his nose outside the door till nearly five o'clock. Then he had nothing but a good-humoured nod for Jack, who had been waiting for him for several long hours. When he saw the *Dolphin* he seemed doubtful whether he should trust himself on board:

"Is she big enough to carry me, do you think?" he asked Jack, with a comical look.

Jack laughed in reply.

"I weigh seventeen stone you know: we all run to fat; my brother's just as fat: happy-go-lucky temperament, I suppose: we see nothing in life worth worrying about. It's a poor lottery after all, and very few prizes in it worth having; few prizes, but a good many surprises, by God, and that's perhaps as interesting."

As he ran on in this way, it seemed to Jack that the man's gift was one of speech rather than of mind. One phrase brought another; he was extraordinarily articulate, thought Jack, a little envious of such superiority, for the reflection came to him at once that perhaps this gift of speech was all-important; it was assuredly the main difference between one man and another.

As soon as he got on board Mr. Fox threw himself into a big chair which Jack had provided for him near the companion on the weather side, and there he remained lost in his own thoughts, or silent simply out of indolence till they reached Calais about ten o'clock that night. The wind was nearly fair and Jack fetched the harbour with one tack.

As the uncle and nephew were getting into the

boat to be put on shore, Lord Holland gave Jack a roll of guineas done up in paper, but Jack handed it back to him.

"Thanks," he said, "but it has been pleasure enough to me to have talked to Mr. Fox."

He stepped forward to give an order, and when he returned Lord Holland had got into the boat and Mr. Fox was preparing to follow him.

"I want to thank you for your trouble, Mr. Morgan," he said, "but here's the price agreed on. I could not think of using your vessel and wasting your time for nothing."

"Don't ask me to take it," said Jack, drawing back, "I'm proud to have had you on board."

"Come, come," said Mr. Fox, "you don't take it from me; it isn't mine, I have nothing. Take my advice, my young friend: always accept money whenever you can get it, and never give it unless you must, and so your days will be long in the land." With that he thrust the money into his hand and stepped down into the boat, and so ended for Jack an experience which made an even deeper impression on him in memory than at the time.

The brigantine, which had not been ready when he left Hurstpoint, was ready when he returned, and Jack immediately took her for another trip to Bordeaux. The shipping of the town, which

had fallen off enormously during the war with England, was now improving by leaps and bounds, though the change from Jack's first visit was still noticeable. Then there had been all along the bend of the Garonne for four miles a forest of English masts: now there were not half so many vessels loading, and only a few dozen peppered about the stream ready to start. But business was growing. One felt, everywhere, the brisk animation, the noise and activity and cheerfulness of a great port. Jack was amused to see that the little armed schooner of the *douaniers,* the "garde-côtes," as it was called, or coastguard vessel, had begun to keep again all the ceremonies and etiquette of a man-of-war of the first class.

Jack went up to the old *Hôtel d'Angleterre,* but he had some difficulty in finding it, for the proprietor had changed the name, the very word England was so hated that he had re-christened his house *Prince's Hotel* for the moment: even in such democratic times an aristocratic name was still preferred by the acute tradesman.

Jack gave a little dinner there to Gosport and Riding, which he began with oysters and Sauterne; but he was amused to find that Gosport thought the white wine too thin.

He went to the theatre afterwards and saw

Molière's *Le Medecin Malgrè Lui.* The theatre was half empty in spite of the fact that the play was followed by a ballet; he was informed by the *ouvreuse* that the Bordelais never went to the theatre on Saturday. The next night he went to a comic opera called *Cendrillon,* and among the numbers which most amused the people was one which began: *Bon Voyage Dumollet,* which was then being hummed from one end of France to the other.

As soon as the orchestra took up the tune the whole audience joined in and began singing:

Bon Voyage
Cher Dumollet
Et revenez
Si le pays vous plait.

Jack could not help thinking of the change from the *Ca Ira* and the *Marseillaise* of only a few years before. The majority of men cannot live long on high levels.

But in spite of dinners and plays and music his depression seemed to deepen. He was as miserable in Bordeaux as he had been in Hurstpoint, more miserable indeed, and he was glad to start back again.

As soon as he reached Hurstpoint he heard of great doings at The Court. Cecil was there with his sister it appeared, and they had the famous and voluminous Lady Albina Buckinghamshire staying with them and Lord Barrymore, the notorious "Skiffy," too, and the dwarfish Lord Valletort, to say nothing of Lord Mandeville and other exquisites.

Jack took to wandering about the roads and lanes that led to The Court, hoping to see Margaret. One afternoon he saw her coming towards him on horseback with a young man by her side, and two or three others behind them, all talking and laughing. Jack stood aside to let them pass, but when about fifty yards away, the young man leant towards Margaret with a sort of proprietor air which set Jack's blood on fire. He stepped into the road at once, and Margaret reined up.

"One word," he said.

Margaret turned to her companions:

"An old friend," she said. "If you will ride on I will overtake you in a few minutes."

"We will wait for you," said the young horseman, bowing low.

"What is it?" asked Margaret, as soon as the others were out of earshot.

"Nothing," said Jack, the sense of his misery coming over him again irresistibly:

"I had no right to stop you or interfere with your enjoyment."

"Why phrases?" snapped Margaret, shortly. "I'm always willing to talk to you, you know that." Taking in his whole attitude of sad depression she went on: "Your wife has gone back to France, I hear?" (Jack nodded.) "I meant to call to see her alone," said Margaret, "and convince her she was mistaken about me. It's absurd of two women quarrelling like that; she had nothing to be jealous of really,—nothing!"

Margaret evidently spoke in good faith, but her earnestness was the last straw: Jack drew back at once:

"Nothing," he repeated, bitterly, nursing the pain—"nothing!"

Margaret's face flushed.

"You're determined to misunderstand me," she cried, angrily, and touched her horse with the whip.

Jack saw her join the rest and disappear down the road; he felt that all was over between them: in some way or other he had blundered again and angered her, even when she had meant to be kind. He gave himself to remorse and despair.

It was Riding who first shook him out of his misery. He had gone to the brigantine to distract himself, and had begun to drink by himself in the cabin when Riding came down the companion. He made several attempts to talk, but Jack answered him in monosyllables. Riding had watched him for a long time, and was more than a little anxious about him. He didn't know the cause of his melancholy brooding. But he liked Jack for his brightness, generosity and quickness, and he wanted to rouse him if he could. He felt it would do Jack good to be forced to exert himself.

"Look here," he said at length, "I want to talk to you. Won't you listen to me and stop drinking?"

"Does my drink prevent your talking?" Jack flung back.

"No, no," said Riding, "at the same time I wish you wouldn't drink so."

"Go ahead," Jack whipped out, "and don't preach."

"You told me once," Riding continued, "and I can never forget it, for it was the day you gave me the five hundred pounds that put me on my feet; you told me then that your father had given you twenty-five thousand pounds to put in the

Funds, and you were going to the Bank of England next day to write your name down as the holder of them: did you do that?"

"I don't know," said Jack.

"Please try to remember," insisted Riding, "it's important."

"I can't remember," barked Jack; "I don't care a damn whether I did or did not."

"You must care a little now," said Riding, "or you'll care a great deal later when you find yourself left without a penny."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," continued Riding, "your father is not the man he was. When a man of sixty odd marries a young woman he's apt to age quickly."

"That's his lookout," said Jack, heedlessly.

"I know, I know," cried Riding, "but it's your lookout to know that his wife's got a good deal of money from him already, and if you don't do something she'll have it all."

"I hope it'll do her good," said heedless Jack.

"Your father," pursued Riding, "is being made a fool of; you surely don't want to see Crosby one day sitting in your place as master of the Inn, enjoying the fortune you have helped to make."

"Crosby?" cried Jack, the name lighting up the old antagonism in him and driving away the fumes

of drink. "Crosby!" He pushed the brandy from him and took a huge drink of water instead:

"What's he got to do with it?"

"Keep your eyes open," said Riding, "and you'll soon see."

"How came you to see?" asked Jack, suspiciously.

"A good deal of gossip's going about," said Riding, "and I keep my ears open to everything which concerns you. Take my advice; if you won't watch yourself, have a talk one day with Gretta Knight. She knows all about it. I wouldn't let Crosby beat me if I were you."

Unwittingly Riding had done Jack even more good than he intended. The introduction of Crosby's name had roused Jack's antagonism and given him something to think of, something to combat, and so weaned his thoughts from his own misery and regrets.

When Jack left the vessel he made up his mind to see Gretta Knight at once, and Riding told him where he would be likely to find her. He went and met her on her way home from the Inn.

He got into talk with her and began flattering her. In a little while he discovered that she hated Nancy, and then the whole story came out. Nancy, it appeared, disliked Jack because he paid

her no attention, and she liked Crosby, and had bragged that she had already got the Inn and most of the money from the old man.

"She's a dirty cat," said Gretta, "and as stingy as she can be. She'd never have let on a word if she hadn't been drinking with Crosby one night."

"But you like Crosby," said Jack to her with a new suspicion in his mind.

"He's pleasant company and that's all," replied Gretta, sharply, tossing her head, "though he's made up to me often enough when Nancy wasn't looking."

"Do you think he's trying to get money out of my father?" asked Jack.

"Of course he is," Gretta replied, "every time you go away they try to get some more."

"Has that been going on long?" questioned Jack.

"Since before the marriage. Crosby's always with Nancy. When your father is at his dinner in the parlour Nancy is in and out pretending to see that things are cooked as he likes, but really to be with Crosby. I only wonder you haven't seen it all. She's mad after him, and they're as bold as bold now. I've seen 'em kissing to-night, and Crosby with his hands on her as no decent woman would allow."

Walking along, Jack thought the matter over. He knew Gretta's vain little venal soul almost by heart.

"It isn't everyone who has your big eyes, Gretta," he said, "or your cleverness."

"Oh, Master Jack," she smirked, "I've always liked you, you know."

"Well, Gretta," he concluded, "perhaps you'll let me know if you hear anything important. In the meantime take this for your trouble," and he gave her the two or three gold pieces he had about him.

"You never kiss me now, Master Jack," pouted Gretta. "I've grown ugly, I suppose, with all the work."

In answer, Jack kissed her, and as he turned back to the Inn he could hear Gretta singing as she went on her way home.

What was to be done? Characteristically enough Jack took the direct way: he went straight back to the Inn. On the road he made up his mind what to do. He still had the lease of The Grange and often slept there. He would hire a cook and give a dinner there to his father, and have a long, quiet talk with him. In the meantime he'd keep his eyes open. When he got to the

Inn he felt instinctively that all Gretta had told him was the truth.

His father was in the kitchen; Crosby was standing between the door leading from the parlour to the bar talking to Nancy. Jack asked his father casually would he come and dine with him some night. The old man looked at him as if surprised, the grey eyes narrowing with suspicion.

"Why can't we dine here?" he asked.

"I think there's going to be war soon," said Jack, inventing a story on the spur of the moment, "Mr. Fox thought so, and I want to talk with you. I want to bring Riding as well."

"Why not bring him here?" persisted his father.

"I think you might come when I ask you," said Jack, a little annoyed, "I want a quiet talk."

The old man smiled slowly:

"All right," he replied, "I'll come. But now, I think, I'll turn in."

It was a cold night and, as luck would have it, the fire went out in the parlour, and Nugent and Myring and Crosby all adjourned to the kitchen, where Jack was sitting. Luckily or unluckily the talk turned on the doings at The Court, and Crosby announced that Miss Margaret was doing her best to hook Lord Mandeville.

Jack said nothing; but all his blood was aflame, and his anger may have shown itself in his face, for Crosby determined to tease him.

"The date of the marriage must be very near," said Nugent, "for Cecil has money again."

"If money has passed, there'll be no marriage," said Crosby, with a great laugh.

The insult was vile; but Jack kept quiet. In all the turmoil of his thoughts there was the idea that he must not bring Margaret's name into the row.

A little later Crosby gave him the opportunity he wanted:

"Are you fitting the brigantine out to fight, Master Jack?" he asked.

As Myring was in the room the question was indiscreet, to say the best of it. Jack looked at him and smiled: he knew that the moment was near:

"That can't interest you," he said.

"Why not?" said Crosby, defiantly, catching the provocation in Jack's tone.

"Because the only thing you'd fight," said Jack, laughing, "is a bottle of brandy, and even then you'd be beaten."

To do him justice Crosby was not a coward, and he was conscious besides of his great strength.

"I don't fight with toothpicks," he snorted, alluding contemptuously to Jack's sword, "but I'm not afraid of any man here in English fashion with fists."

"Your mouth's your strong point," retorted Jack, bitterly.

"Come out and try it with fists," cried Crosby.

"We needn't go out," said Jack, getting up.

"Don't let them fight," cried Nancy, shutting the door so that the noise should not be heard, and appealing alternately to Myring and to Nugent. "Don't let them fight, for God's sake!"

But neither man attempted to interfere, and she could do nothing but put her back against the door and wait.

"I meant giving it you when we were at school," said Crosby, viciously, while pulling off his coat, "but you'll lose nothing by waiting."

"You great lout," replied Jack; and the next moment Crosby swung at him.

Jack avoided it by stepping back and then rushed in. He had already decided how he would fight and, though he had little or no practice with fists, his knowledge of sword-play stood him in good stead, the principles of all fighting being the same. He rained blows on that part of his opponent's body that was nearest to him—his stom-

ach, and no tactics could have served him better; for his opponent was gross with overeating.

He had soon driven Crosby right back across the kitchen, and, before the big fellow could rally, his legs tripped over a stool and he came on his back to the ground.

"Let him up," cried Myring.

"Yes, let him up," said Nugent, coming between them.

They were both minded to see that Crosby, at any rate, had fair play. In a moment Crosby was on his feet again. He was flushed and out of breath and a little ruffled, but as confident in his strength as ever. He was very intelligent, too, and fully realised that if he let Jack get close to him he would surely be beaten. He resolved to step back and use his fists in long swings like flails. This he did, and for some time Jack saw no opening, had to give ground, indeed, for Crosby kept swinging with both hands, and Jack, after stopping one, felt that there was great force in the big man's blows.

In turn Crosby kept driving him across the room, but suddenly, after a heavier swing than usual, Jack saw his chance and jumped in again, and again the fight turned at once in his favour. At half arm's length he kept driving his fists into

Crosby's body as hard as he could, heedless of the three or four cuffs that Crosby gave him about the head and ears.

This time Crosby was driven across the room to the wall, and once against the wall he exerted himself and threw Jack off, and as Jack tried to rush in he met him with a swing in the face that brought the blood streaming from Jack's nose.

"Ha! Ha!" cried Crosby, exultant, "got it then, did ye?" and immediately followed up his success with swing on swing.

Again Jack retreated, and a little later dodged beneath the big man's fists and began punching him again.

For eight or ten minutes the fight went on in this way: Jack gaining in the near fighting and Crosby at long bowls. Condition began to tell; thanks to his harder life and more energetic nature, Jack was in much better fettle than his opponent.

"The little fellow is harder," said Myring to Nugent.

"Harder and quicker," rejoined Nugent, "gets in three blows to Crosby's one. Our man's beginning to get groggy."

Nugent was right. Crosby's face had already turned from red to pale: those body blows of

Jack's had driven all the wind out of him, and he was beginning to feel the effects of years of indolent living and too much drink.

But the great game has many chances in it, and no one ever gets all the luck. Crosby was beginning to doubt the issue, and fear made him think. In his turn, Jack was getting over-confident, and so the pendulum of fortune swung to Crosby's side.

When next he got Jack away from him he began to make short jabs with his left hand while holding his right in reserve. After twice or thrice evading the blows of Crosby's left, Jack ducked and rushed in, and Crosby hit out, viciously swinging his right with all his strength.

As luck would have it he caught Jack just on the point of the chin, and at once felled him to the floor, his eyes blinded with what seemed a glare of coloured lights.

When Jack came to himself he found that the cook had got him into a chair and Nancy was giving him some brandy. That was all he knew.

As the brandy began to run through him, and the blood began to stir again in his veins, he was conscious that Crosby was in front of him.

"Have you had enough?" cried Crosby, "or do you want some more?"

"All you can give me," replied Jack, pulling himself to his feet.

"No, no," said Nancy, "you mustn't. Please, please, gentlemen, stop them fighting; he can't stand," and, indeed, Jack could hardly hold himself upright: the floor was waving underneath him worse than a ship's deck in a storm, and there was a deadly sick faintness on him.

But Crosby, delighted at his unexpected success, and having had time fully to realise the revulsion from fear to joy, was determined to improve his victory.

"Leave him alone, Nancy," he said, "he's had enough; one blow's enough for him."

Jack's answer was a rush at him. The rush was so unexpected that Crosby could only strike wildly. The blow caught Jack on the shoulder, but he was so weak that it knocked him down.

Strange to say the fall, instead of doing him harm, did him good. When he got up on his feet again he felt stronger. He realised at once clearly that all he had to do was to avoid a crushing blow and he would get better quickly.

He rushed in again, ducking to avoid Crosby's swing, and this time followed him across the kitchen, punching him right and left. By the time

he got him to the wall he found his strength had come back. The fight was not over yet.

Helped by the wall Crosby thrust Jack back from him and began again his long left-hand jabs, keeping the right in reserve.

But now Jack was as cautious as Crosby. In a moment or two he saw that if he ducked under his left hand he could get in on that side and so avoid his opponent's right-hand swing.

Again Crosby began to feel afraid; his plan had been countered, and he no longer had faith in it. He began to fight wildly as he had done at first. Again and again Jack drove him across the room to the wall, again and again he found it more difficult even when backed by the wall to get Jack away from him; at length it was not difficult merely but impossible. Crosby stood propped against the wall while Jack was driving his blows into him, and he could only cuff Jack feebly about the head, for Jack was too close in for the big man's blows to be effective.

After a little thought Nugent came to his friend's assistance.

"Come, come," he said, pulling Jack back, "give the man time to breathe, that's been a long round: he let you get up."

Jack only looked at him: he knew he had the

fight in hand; he had only to stick to it, and he meant sticking.

As soon as Nugent let him loose he sprang again at Crosby, and the end came suddenly.

A heavy body blow brought Crosby's head forward, and Jack gave him his right as hard as he could in the face.

Down went the big man on his back and lay stone-still. At first Jack didn't grasp what had happened. The blow and fall together had knocked Crosby's senses out of him.

Myring and Nugent soon propped him up in a chair, but they could not make him drink. Minute after minute passed and they began to get frightened. Jack's anger had all left him: he never could like the fellow, but his hate had evaporated.

"Stretch him out on the floor," he said, "throw some water on him and he'll come to," and he went himself to get the water.

In a few moments after the water had been thrown on him Crosby came slowly to himself. But evidently his heart had been affected by the pummelling; for the colour didn't come back to his cheeks, and when they tried to pour brandy down his throat it only made him violently sick. The hammering he had got about the stomach, coming

after years of loose living, had exhausted him completely.

Jack went off for the barber-surgeon, and when he came back he found that Nancy had washed Crosby's face, and Myring and Nugent had laid him to rest on the big settee in the parlour.

Nancy had gone up and brought pillows and bed clothes and made him comfortable.

Jack sent in the doctor and went up to bed.

CHAPTER IX

NEXT morning Jack was as well as ever, in fact, he felt as if the hard exercise of the night before had cleared his head and lightened his spirits, and he soon noticed that the report of the fight had done him a great deal of good in the village. Everyone showed him an added tinge of respect and cordiality. Even the gentry from the country round began to nod to him again good-humouredly, as if they were glad to see him. Jack saw with amusement that his thrashing of Crosby had lifted him higher in public esteem than his taking of the East Indiaman or his learning French, or, indeed, any of the more difficult things he had done. His father even showed himself curiously elated and proud.

"I knew you could beat the fellow," he said, "we Morgans are a tough lot; but a small place like the kitchen gave him a great advantage; he's a big, powerful fellow. . . . I suppose his heart gave out; those big men are always weak about the heart; but I'm glad they had to carry him home; it'll take some of the swagger out of him."

Jack found that his dinner might just as well have been given at the Inn, for Crosby didn't show his nose in the village for months. But, as he had asked his father to The Grange, the dinner took place there.

Jack wished to put his father in a good humour, and, as the old man after dinner wanted to hear all about the fight, Jack gave him a brief account of it, and told him that whatever courage he had probably came from him, for one of his earliest recollections was of the wreck that had taken place on the beach and of his father sending Newton with the line that established communication and saved the shipwrecked people.

"Do you remember that?" cried the old man, greatly pleased. "It was much the same thing," he continued, " that first won your mother. I was mate of a coasting brig, and we had run in from Cardiff with coals. It came on to blow hard in the night, and the end of it was the brig dragged her anchors and went ashore. We were only a hundred yards from the beach, and the whole village turned out on the shingle to watch us, but they couldn't get to us and we couldn't get to them, and the brig began to break up under our feet. One man tried to swim ashore, an uncle of Gibby's it was, a big, fat fellow, who could swim like a

porpoise. But he was carried clear of the vessel, and the moment he got from under her lee he was battered to pieces in the breakers. That showed me the set of the tide, so I went off the bowsprit end with a piece of string round my waist and just managed to get ashore.

"They pulled me out more dead than alive and carried me up to the Inn, and your mother (she was a girl then) could not do enough for me. I thought no one ever had such soft hands or kind ways. I kissed her hands one day," he added, "when I was getting well, and that was the beginning of it. Poor Mary."

After a moment or two the old man broke out:

"But what did you want to see me about, Jack? You haven't told me yet, and I must be getting back. I don't sleep much nowadays," he went on, "but I like to rest in bed, a need I never felt," he said, "up to a short time ago."

Jack was struck by a certain tonelessness in the old man's voice. He noticed, too, with a shrinking at heart that his father's black hair was already getting grey. It was evident he was ageing rapidly, his cheeks were baggy, his eyes had lost their brightness.

"I don't want to beat about the bush," said Jack. "I'm sure you won't do me any injury, but

there's a good deal of talk about that you're giving your money to Nancy. I don't mind that," he went on, rapidly, for the old man seemed about to speak, "you have a right to do what you will with your money; you've earned it, and it's yours. But some years ago you gave me twenty-five thousand pounds; didn't you? And I have relied on that, and it would not be fair of you to take it away without letting me know, for I should have to go to work at once and earn some more."

His father laughed.

"Don't you remember?" he asked, "that you signed for that twenty-five thousand pounds; it's all in your name; I couldn't take it if I wanted to."

"That's all right then," said Jack, "that's all I wanted to know."

"Had you forgotten that it stands in your name?" asked the old man, curiously.

"I remembered something about it," confessed Jack, "but it was all vague, and when Riding asked me the other day I could not tell him."

"Ah! it was Riding put it into your head?" cried his father, as if relieved of the last doubt.

"Yes," said Jack, quite ingenuously, "Riding and Gretta Carter."

"Oh, ho," laughed the old man, "the plot thickens. I wonder did Gretta know anything through Crosby."

"That was it," said Jack, relieved not to have to say anything against Nancy.

"Now I understand it all," said the old man: "you see," he said, cunningly, beginning to tap on the table with his fingers in the old way that Jack knew so well, "when anything happens that I don't understand, I go to work to put myself in the place of the other people, and try to come at the explanation. I guessed you wished to see me about money, from your hesitation and your wanting me to come here. But it was not like you to think of money without being put up to it by some one. I couldn't quite make out who had put you up to it."

Jack laughed outright. He had no idea that his father was so thoughtful and cunning.

"Riding," he said, "Riding and Gretta."

"I'm very glad," said the old man, simply, "that you didn't doubt me. You're curiously like your mother in some things, you know," he added, "and she thought no more of money than of dirt. Never thought enough of it, and you don't think enough of it, my lad," he went on, "though you've a good deal of me in you, too."

"I didn't need to think of it," replied Jack, "you wouldn't have given it to me years ago if you had meant to take it back later."

"That's not quite true," said the father, "but it doesn't matter. Did you ever make out why I gave it to you?"

"No," said Jack, surprised at the question.

"Well," said the old man, with a cunning smile, "I gave it to you because I wanted to excite ambition in you. I said to myself if Jack knows he has money and a mortgage on The Court, he'll go in and win that girl, Margaret Barron. Why, as a child," he went on, "she liked you, anyone could see it; you were her hero, lad. But that prison business came in the way. Well, well," said the old man, "perhaps it's all for the best," and as he spoke he took a big packet from his inner pocket. "I may just as well let you know how you stand now."

"No, no," said Jack, "I would rather leave it all to you."

His father paid no attention to this; but after putting on a pair of spectacles, undid the tape round the papers, and, laying one packet before him, said:

"There's the twenty-five thousand pounds you put in the Funds. I have added half of all we

have made since to it, and it's now fifty thousand pounds, Master Jack."

"What?" cried Jack in astonishment.

"Yes, yes," said his father, "and more than that. You have taken nothing out, and it's all been going in, and in that case it's astonishing how money grows."

"Astonishing, indeed," said Jack, "but how has it doubled itself?"

"You bought in at fifty-four," said his father, "the Funds are now at seventy. These savings of yours, if sold now, would fetch over fifty thousand pounds."

"Your astonishment," the old man went on, "ought to show you your own weak spot; you don't think enough of money, Jack, how quickly it grows and how quickly it melts, like a snowball, indeed."

Jack laughed, relieved: "Even that knowledge may come to me, dad," he said.

The old man shook his head doubtfully.

"Now, that's yours," he went on, shoving the packet across the table. "You can do what you like with it. But if I were you I'd never touch the principal nor alter the investment. If you want to send it to Wiggins he'll collect the interest on

it as it comes in, and either put it to your account or add it to the principal as you choose."

"You're a wonderful teacher, dad," said Jack, laughing, "I'll take your advice to the letter."

"Now here," said the old man, "is the mortgage I've got on The Court. It's now sixty thousand pounds; the old man and Master Cecil borrowed the last ten thousand they'll get from me the other day. The Court's worth a hundred thousand pounds, perhaps a hundred and twenty: but I don't want to lend more than half the value of it. They're not likely to get anyone in these war times to give them more than sixty thousand for it."

Again Jack stared. The old man's calculation and his cunning were almost inconceivable to him.

"This is yours, too," went on his father, touching the mortgage, "when you want it. I have made out a deed, and here's a certified copy of it: the original is deposited with Wiggins, you can have the certified copy," he said. "When I'm dead and gone The Court'll be yours."

"But what will Emily have?" asked Jack.

"When I gave you your twenty-five thousand," replied his father, "I gave Emily twenty-five thousand, too. Hers has grown almost as quickly as yours: Emily is worth nearly fifty thousand

pounds to-day, and I have tied it up tight on her and her children. She's one of the richest heiresses in the county of Sussex, and that's good enough for her. I don't know where she came from," continued the old man, "she's not like your mother and she isn't like me. But she's very like a sister of my mother's. I often think our children aren't more than half ours: half of them belongs to the father and mother, the other half comes from the past, from the grandfathers and grandmothers and great grandfathers and great grandmothers, and so on. My Aunt Jane," he remarked, "was just such another as your sister Emily, always thinking of dress and manners, full of little affectations. But if Emily gets children she'll perhaps get sense. Anyhow, she's provided for. . . .

"There's nothing more except the Inn and the vessels and a little nest-egg I've got which I say nothing about for the moment, but which your smuggling has been making for both of us. Of course you shall have the brigantine and the *Dolphin;* and Nancy may have the Inn and the little craft; quite enough for her to live on; but whether it'll content her I don't know. . . ."

He chuckled to himself. "Take up your money," he said, and give it to Wiggins to-

morrow and I'll give him back this mortgage. Now we'll have another drink, my boy!"

"Don't you think you've drunk enough, dad?"

The old man burst out laughing: "That's funny," he said, "that's just what I've been thinking about you, Jack; you can stand it better, but you young people don't need it. A glass or two does me good, picks me up amazing, clears my head, makes me feel as I used to feel twenty years ago. But even a little does you harm, you're all right without it."

Jack laughed: "You're a good arguer," he said. "I've begun to think you're right, but one glass won't hurt either of us."

A little later his father went back to the train of thought he had already dismissed.

"You thought I was blind to what was going on, didn't you?" he asked with half-closed eyes.

"No, but I didn't imagine you saw as clearly as you do," Jack admitted.

"I see a good deal," said the old man boastingly. "Nancy will be well off, but whether she'll have enough to keep Crosby faithful to her or not, I don't know," and the old man chuckled diabolically.

"What do you mean?" cried Jack aghast.

"I mean," said the old man, looking at him

sideways out of narrow eyes, "I mean to give her the whip hand over Master Crosby when I'm gone and she has a fiend's temper when she gets angry or has a little drink in her," and again the old man chuckled.

"Good God!" cried Jack. "Why do you live with her if you think that of her?"

"Can't help it," said the old man; "after all, what is there in life besides getting a bit of power and enjoying yourself. Rum's bad for me; the first glass does me no harm, but every glass afterwards hurts me, makes me fat, too. I never took it so long as life was interesting, but now I've got about as far as I can get. I've left you and your sister well off and I'm often a bit low; besides I like a drop of rum, so I drink it. . . ."

"I like Nancy, too," he began again. "She's a splendid piece of flesh and blood, but I would not give her the whip hand for a good deal . . ." and he poured himself out another drink, almost neat this time; Jack looked on without remonstrance as at some strange revelation of life half divined.

"A rare good piece is Nancy," his father went on, as if to himself. "I ought to have met her first and your mother afterwards. You know," he said, "your mother was the only good woman I

ever met in my life. She taught me all the kind things; a rare good woman, and I wouldn't cheat you or your sister for ten thousand Nancies. And as for Crosby, he's making himself a nice bed. When I go I'd like to see him in it," and the old man chuckled, "the swaggering big fool!"

Jack felt that there was no more to be said. A little later he took his father home and delivered him over to Nancy.

But his father's advice didn't do Jack much good. He stopped drinking, it is true, for a few days, but gradually he took it up again, and in the winter evenings he drank more heavily than ever.

The party at The Court had all separated and gone up to London, but my Lords Mandeville and Barrymore had come down for the shooting and Jack knew from the tittle-tattle of Nugent and Myring and from occasional things his sister, Emily let drop that Mandeville was as determined in his pursuit of Margaret as ever.

His sister had become very religious, almost saintly indeed; she was in the church at all hours and when she wasn't in the church she was talking to young Carrol. She knew all about the Creeds and copes and chasubles and had even

taken to dressing her hair Madonna fashion in the house. When out walking she wore the fashionable toque without feathers and depressed at the edges which gave her a nun-like air. But she went up to The Court as often as ever and now and then she condescended to tell Jack what was going on there. One day she told him about some private theatricals and how in the middle of a scene Lord Mandeville, having to declare his love, had forgotten his part and gone on both knees to Margaret, crying:

"I'll be the happiest man in London if you'll marry me, and that's true, though I can't remember the words.

"How did she take it?" asked Jack.

"She liked it," said his sister, "every woman would."

Jack went away and, as soon as he could, got out of the house into the air. "Every woman would," of course they would! He walked to the edge of The Court domain to a place in the fence where through the trees he could see the house, and there he stood in the drizzling rain for a couple of hours gazing at the place with burning eyes and heavy heart.

How long he had been there he never knew. Something made him turn and instinctively he

took three or four steps across the grass to the road.

In the dusk a figure was coming towards him. His heart seemed to stop in his throat, choking: it was Margaret. As she came up to him she bowed as if she were going to pass on, and then perhaps struck by his immobility she stopped and held out her hand.

"Good evening, Jack," she said simply. "You're a stranger."

"Yes," retorted Jack roughly. "I don't go where I'm not wanted."

"And where are you not wanted?" she asked.

"Not at The Court," he barked, "with my Lord Mandeville."

'No one has ever told you you weren't wanted at The Court," she remarked quietly.

"One knows certain things without being told."

"You know nothing," she said quickly. "I sometimes think you must be more stupid even than most men. Yes, stupid," she said, challenged by his glowering look. "How can you go on living as you do in the Inn when you might do such great things. Mr. Fox talks of you everywhere as extraordinary," she added hastily, "yet you go on drinking and quarrelling—wasting your life."

"How do you know what Mr. Fox thinks?" he asked. "He hasn't returned from Paris yet."

"No, but Lord Holland has, and Lord Holland told me that Mr. Fox said you were one of the ablest men he had ever met. 'He might do anything' were his words."

Mollified in spite of himself, Jack could not give up the bitterness of the thoughts he had lived with for so long.

"What does it matter to you," he flung out, "what I do or don't do?"

"It matters to everyone who knows you," she replied.

"It doesn't matter to you," cried Jack, "how I go to hell. I'm sick of smuggling," he went on. "I've money enough without it. If war comes I can't fight against the French or for them. What am I to do?"

She looked at him with inscrutable eyes: "I don't know, Jack," she said slowly, "but you can be a man and take your punishment like a man, and not go on drinking and brawling. . . . You're not the only one to suffer," she added, as if to herself, "but suffering should make us kinder and better, and not degrade us."

"What do you mean by degrade?"

"I mean," she retorted, "what everybody

knows, that you fought with Crosby about a girl called Gretta Knight."

"Who told you that lie?" he barked.

"It's common talk," she defended.

"And you listen to it?" he said contemptuously.

"I can't shut my ears," she confessed, "to your sister."

Jack looked at her. His sister's name put something into his head.

"It's a lie," he said, "no matter who tells it, but I wanted to say something to you," he broke in. "The common talk is that you're going to marry that Lord Mandeville because your brother has gambled and spent a fortune, and because The Court's mortgaged. . . .

"I don't know what effect poverty would have on you," he went on after a pause. "People take it for granted that girls will do anything for money or to help their relatives. But I want to tell you that I know who holds the mortgage on The Court and it will never be foreclosed or used against you. One of these days you shall have it back. The Court is yours. You needn't marry for money unless you want to."

"As if money matters," she replied disdainfully.

"It does matter," he insisted, "it might matter greatly to you."

"Never," she retorted proudly. "You don't know me," and made as if to pass on.

He saw the outline of her figure against the dusk as she passed, and suddenly her words, "You're not the only one to suffer," which he had not noticed at the moment, came back to him, and all his pent up passion burst out: one step and he threw his arms round her.

"You're the only woman I love or want, sober or drunk, Margaret, I want you—I love you."

She tried vehemently to drag herself away, but she was as a child in arms of steel. He put his right hand round her shoulders and under her chin and drew her head back, and kissed her on the mouth again and again.

She struggled with him indignantly.

"You brute," she gasped.

"Yes, a brute," he cried, "who loves you, Margaret," and he went on kissing her.

Suddenly he noticed that she was not resisting, and at once the wild fit passed; then half repentant and taken in a flood of tenderness, he kissed her on the shut eyes and on her hair:

"My darling, darling, darling."

"I'll never forgive you," she cried, drawing herself free. "You've hurt me," and she moved away.

But Jack's tenderness had overpowered his passion, and now it gave him the right words:

"You'll forgive me all right," he said, "perhaps sooner than I'll forgive myself," and as she stopped, he cried, "Good-bye dear," and kneeling at her feet, he kissed her dress and her hand, and then realising his own misery and loss turned from her into the dark.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

THAT last talk with Margaret had taken away a good deal of Jack's bitterness. It freed him to a certain extent from jealousy with its perpetual sensuous excitation; he was no less hopeless, but the thought of Margaret for some reason or other lent dignity to his own suffering. He would play the man he resolved as she advised, and the first thing he did was to stop drinking. In the first days he was astonished to find the hold the habit had on him; he had to resist a continual instinctive craving. Again and again he was on the point of drinking when he remembered. The struggle roused his combativeness and his power of resolution, and after three or four days he was delighted to discover that the craving had left him altogether: the fight, though sharp, was short.

Immediately he left off drinking he began to notice how stupid he had been ever to let the habit get any hold on him. Not only did his

general health improve, but he soon took as much pleasure in drinking tea and milk as he had found in drinking wine and spirits. Besides, this one act of self-denial, rewarded as it was, made all other acts of self-denial easier to him. He now noticed what the drink had hitherto concealed: that this or that dish disagreed with him; he promptly refused it with the result that his health soon became perfect and his enjoyment of life and interest in living grew almost from day to day.

On his way to the ship one day Jack met Emily going to church. She looked charmingly demure Jack thought and was getting prettier than ever.

After a few words of greeting he suddenly asked her:

"By the bye Emily, why did you tell Margaret Barron that Crosby and I fought about Gretta Knight; you must have known that was not true?"

"I didn't know anything of the sort," she flashed out. "I had seen Crosby talking to Gretta quite lately, and she certainly used to be a flame of yours."

"A flame of mine?" cried Jack. "You must be mad."

"I'm not mad at all," she retorted. "It was all over the village that you were seen kissing

her and the girl didn't deny it; I asked her at the time; she couldn't deny it."

"Oh you did, did you?" said Jack. "Well, I wish you would not interfere in my business. It would be better," he went on hotly, "if you kept your unholy suggestions to yourself. Why you should want to hurt me with Margaret Barron I can't, for the life of me, imagine."

"Hurt you," cried his sister disdainfully. "You don't know what you're talking about. It was the very way to make her think more of you. A little jealousy does a woman no harm; it wakes her up and makes her realise where she stands. I can assure you if she doesn't feel jealousy she certainly doesn't feel love. Lots of women are jealous without loving, but no woman loves without being jealous. If everyone did you as much good with Margaret Barron as I've done, you wouldn't need to complain. . . .

"If you hadn't gone back that time to France and made a fool of yourself by marrying Suzanne it might all have been different."

"You may be right," Jack admitted against his will.

"Of course I'm right," she said, "and you know it."

Jack took Riding with him in the *Dolphin* and

went over to Boulogne more to see how the land lay than with any purpose even of smuggling. Curiously enough the more he saw of Riding the better he liked him; there was in him a great fund of sound sense, a kindliness, too, of nature which were attaching. Jack often marvelled where he got his wisdom from, as Riding seemed to have read but little. Jack was only beginning to discover that one learns more from life than from books.

The smugglers about Wimereux had increased enormously in numbers; there were nearly a thousand of them now in the little fishing village, French and English, a floating population coming and going, a population of hard drinkers and hard fighters, too, if need were. But he hadn't much time to get acquainted with them; the old hands of course he knew, but many of the younger men were complete strangers to him.

He was astonished one day to find a stage-coach at Pin's door and in the hall an enormously fat lady, who, when she moved aside, disclosed just as fat a man; it was Mr. Fox. As soon as he caught sight of Jack he came over to him and held out his hand.

"The very man I wanted to see," he cried cordially. "Can you give us a passage across.

My wife," he said, "Mr. Morgan," and the fat lady smiled at Jack.

"Of course," said Jack. "I shall be honoured, but the vessel's the same little craft."

"Ah! ha!" roared Mr. Fox, "you remember I was afraid there would not be room for me. Now you'll have to take two of us and my wife's even bigger than I am."

Jack asked when they wished to start.

"The sooner the better," Mr. Fox cried, so Jack hurried on board at once to make the best preparation possible for his distinguished passengers.

That same afternoon they drew out of harbour with a light air and an almost perfectly calm sea. From the beginning Mr. Fox treated our hero quite differently from the first time, like a friend indeed, and instead of sitting almost mute on deck he talked quite freely from the beginning, perhaps rejoicing a little in the pleasure of talking English after having been compelled to use French for months, for though he spoke French fluently, it was a sort of English-French, and must have seemed funny to Bonaparte.

"War is inevitable," he told Jack in the course of the evening. "Bonaparte is very ambitious and astoundingly vain."

"Do you think him a great man?" Jack ventured to ask.

"I suppose so," said Mr. Fox, a little reluctantly, "but successful men are never so great as they are made out to be; it's like judging a man by his shadow," he went on, as if he had thought of the matter before, "and that's never so large as when his sun's near the setting.

"Bonaparte," he resumed in a brisker way, "has curious illusions; he was persuaded that English ministers had tried to assassinate him. I told him to put that out of his head. He has an astonishing sense of his own importance; he thinks the world turns round him. And in Paris they appear to regard him as omnipotent. . . . It is curious what flunkies men are, even in a republic," he added, as if amused with human folly.

Jack put before him Caressà's view of Bonaparte; told what he had done in that first marvellous Italian campaign, but Mr. Fox did not appear to be greatly impressed.

"I daresay he can strike quickly and ruthlessly," he admitted. "He seemed to me amazingly clear and decisive rather than big," he went on, as if trying to give words to vague, because hitherto undefined, feelings. "Great men as a rule are

richer in temperament than he appears to be, and richer in faults, too," he added.

"One has to judge everyone by oneself," he explained. "As a young man I went astray in every direction and fell into every sort of quagmire. Like the prodigal son I wasted my strength in riotous living and my substance at the gaming-table—all vanity and vexation of spirit. Cæsar, too, ran into debt," he said, as if defending himself, "owed more than anyone ever owed in Rome before, but Bonaparte has no rich, generous faults; his conceit, his self-confidence, seemed to me his weak point, the rock on which he may founder; but then I don't know him really," he added meditatively.

"You were right in one thing," he resumed, addressing Jack directly. "France has assuredly recovered strength and health and hope in the most remarkable fashion; every Frenchman one meets resents our English policy, or perhaps one should call it the English temper of suspicion and contempt of all things French. It's a great pity that the two peoples cannot understand each other better. . . .

"I'm inclined to think sometimes," he said, looking at Jack and laughing, "that we should imprison half our insular population in France

as you were imprisoned for a year or so; and half the Frenchmen in England; then there might be some chance that they'd live together peaceably. But there's going to be war. Bonaparte is full of the idea that he can conquer England. . . .

"I'm not a sailor," Mr. Fox went on, "but it seems to me a pretty difficult business even to land a large force; isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed," laughed Jack.

"Could a large force be ferried over on rafts or flat-bottomed boats?" Mr. Fox questioned further.

"One frigate," replied Jack, "could deal with a thousand rafts—one revenue cutter even would play havoc with a dozen of 'em; the idea is ridiculous."

"Oh, ho!" laughed Mr. Fox. "Bonaparte would give something for a talk with you, my friend, but I expect there are not many sailors like you in England and fewer still in France."

"There are good and bad sailors everywhere," said Jack. "I have met good French sailors," he added, thinking of the captain of the frigate that had captured the brigantine.

When they reached Hurstpoint, Jack wanted to know whether Mr. and Mrs. Fox would like to go direct to London, but they decided to pass

the night at the Inn which Mr. Fox declared had the best Burgundy he had ever tasted.

When the dinner was prepared Mr. Fox insisted that Jack should sit down with them, and at the end of dinner when the Burgundy had been approved he suddenly asked his guest:

"Why don't you get a commission in our navy?"

"There'd be no chance of that," replied Jack, flushing with pleasure.

"Well," said Mr. Fox in the careless large way that added to the value of the promise, "I haven't much credit with the government, but I think I've enough for that. I will see about it when I get to London if you like."

"Thank you," said Jack, "but I'm married to a Frenchwoman," he went on hesitatingly.

"The deuce you are," exclaimed Mr. Fox. "Does that give you a divided allegiance?"

"It makes fighting the French more difficult for me," replied Jack.

"You must remember," said Mr. Fox after a pause, "that you are not really fighting France now, but Bonaparte. I've retired from public affairs," he added, "simply because I didn't wish to combat French ideas which seemed to me just and right. But now Bonaparte is making himself a despot. I should have no hesitation in combat-

ing his ambitions and fighting him. It's a very hard thing," he continued meditatively, "to go against one's country, very difficult indeed to know when not to go with it even when it's in the wrong; it's like judging one's mother—very difficult and disagreeable at the best. . . ."

Jack was struck with the sad gravity of his tone and manner; struck, too, with the comparison.

"I think you should have a commission," Mr. Fox resumed. "If I'm right, you'll need it before long," and Jack did not dissent, though he was not yet fully persuaded.

In all their talks together Jack drew a certain inspiration from the great man. Mr. Fox was the only person except old Dr. Sauvan who had ever talked general ideas to him, and they stimulated his mind and quickened his own thinking.

He understood the fascination exercised by the man who continually referred to general ideas of justice and benevolence, and was never a partisan of his own class, but a friend of the friendless with large generous instincts.

CHAPTER II

WHILE still weighing Mr. Fox's words and expecting vaguely to receive from him the promised commission Jack received a short letter from Caressa: "Suzanne is ill, come at once."

Jack showed the letter to his father and set off the same day. On his way to Cherbourg he couldn't help reproaching himself; he had been away from Suzanne a considerable time and had been faithless to her in thought and in feeling, if not in deed; nor could he conceal from himself that their estrangement was in the main his fault.

When he reached Cherbourg he was shocked to find her in bed; she had caught a cold, it appeared, and had got congestion of the lungs, and in her condition hadn't been able to shake it off. She was inclined to be querulous and reproachful at first, but Jack met her with real tenderness, and laid himself out to think of nothing but her and her comfort. A few days of his constant tendance made her resolve to get up, and in a week she

began to come downstairs regularly. Within a month Doctor Sauvan said that her lungs were all right again, the congestion had been overcome and had only left a slight trace, though great weakness.

Every fine day Jack took her out for a drive, and she soon began to get about the house apparently in her usual health save for a little cough which now and then seized her when she took unusual exercise.

In this quiet time of home duties and daily observances Jack was delighted to renew acquaintance with both Sauvan and the little Colonel. Caressa seemed to have become dearer to him through absence. Jack could not help loving the peppery little man who fought for his ideas and beliefs just as he must have charged at the head of his Chasseurs, with all his heart and soul in the business. He had been decorated by Bonaparte with an officer's cross of the Legion of Honour and he was passionately convinced that the distinction was the highest on earth, as indeed it was for some time after its inauguration.

Jack was not inclined to take as much interest in Dr. Sauvan as he had formerly taken. He knew now that the man was selfish and self-absorbed and had not much kindness in him to spend on anyone. But Jack could not help seeing

that the doctor had read widely and had been brought up to think in a precise good school. To hear Sauvan and the Colonel arguing, the one in favour of the Revolution and equality and the other in love with an all-wise and all-good despot, was an unforgettable experience. In face of the great fact that in ten years France had come from the depths of poverty and misery to an astonishing height of comfort and power it was impossible to deny that the Doctor's theories of equality had to a certain extent justified themselves. The nobles and priests had been dispossessed and their land divided among millions of poor peasants. Hope had spread immediately through the people, hope and energy, and these had brought in their train wealth and power. It was the Revolution, Sauvan insisted which had supplied Bonaparte with force; in himself he was nothing—a little Corsican adventurer.

"But till he came," Caressa cried, "till he came you had nothing but defeats, or, at best, a victory now and a defeat to-morrow, nothing decisive. It's his genius that has turned the tide, his personality has made all the difference."

Sauvan merely shrugged his shoulders:

"Wait and see," he would say, "wait and see. The world has already paid a good deal for its

childish belief in great men, and France'll yet have to pay heavily for her belief in Bonaparte."

Jack was not at all satisfied that either man represented the whole truth. His talks with Mr. Fox had given him a certain confidence in himself and in his own judgment which he had hitherto lacked. One day he put it to the two men whether it wouldn't be possible to reconcile their theories.

"No, no," said Sauvan, "they are contradictories and cannot be reconciled."

Even Caressa shrugged his shoulders: "What sort of an army would that be in which a general and a common soldier were on the same level; who takes as much care of his hands or feet as he does of his head or esteems his toes the equal of his eyes?"

But Jack was determined to get his vague feeling into words:

"How would it be," he said, "if there could be equality or a great approach to equality in necessaries, while keeping all the distinctions as honours. The toes need to be nourished just as much as the eyes, and if you starve the toes, the eyes will soon close of themselves. It seems to me that all should be assured of the necessaries of life and we should keep the honours for the

higher functions. Honours would be more esteemed if they could not be won by money."

But each of the combatants preferred his half truth and fought for it all the more passionately because its limitations suited the shortcomings of his own nature.

Jack got accustomed to reading a good deal in the parlour with his wife, and he found she was quite happy so long as he was with her, and would listen to her chatter about household affairs and the small talk of the prison. Since she had become a mother Suzanne had developed a new personality; she not only fulfilled all the duties of the part with exemplary tenderness, but was endowed with a new self-esteem and a new confidence in herself and her judgment. Even Jack was not so necessary to her as he had been, and she ordered both him and her uncle about at will. The baby-girl and her mother were the chief personages in the household; Suzanne said the baby had Jack's eyes and the Colonel's chin; but only a young mother could discover the likeness.

In this quiet interlude Jack, too, got to know his little girl-daughter and became really attached to her; the effort to excite her love, the very care and attention he lavished on her increased his affection, and the mother was delighted

to believe that Jack was in love with the daughter for her sake.

Altogether the little household was very happy and very contented till one day Caressa got an official letter. It was from the First Consul telling him curtly that war with England was practically resolved on, and that he must consult with the Mayor and devise measures to seize all the English visitors and travellers in Cherbourg at the declaration of war and put them in prison.

The little Colonel was too loyal to his chief and benefactor to hesitate or even to criticise him, but he couldn't regard Jack as an enemy, and so he showed him the letter.

It was plain that Jack must leave France at once, for even Caressa was frightened. He felt uncertain whether Bonaparte would or would not proceed to extremities with his prisoners. Everything was possible to him, the Colonel admitted; everything that seemed likely to make victory more certain. "He would sacrifice himself," said Caressa half proudly, "why not you or me?"

The argument was irresistible. Jack could only beg Suzanne to take care of herself and assure her that he would not fight against France and then hurry away.

It was with the utmost difficulty that he got to

Boulogne. Luckily for him his knowledge of French was now so good that among ordinary people at any rate he could pass easily for a Frenchman. Luckily, too, Caressa had taken care to furnish him with a complete passport countersigned by the Mayor of Cherbourg, for he was stopped again and again. Evidently Bonaparte's orders had gone out all over France and were being obeyed enthusiastically. But though the imperious will was operative at Boulogne it ceased three miles out of the town at Wimereux.

As soon as Jack got to Pin's café he was as safe and as welcome as he would have been in Hurstpoint, for the whole smugglers' camp was disgusted with the idea of war. Their trade had grown enormously in the year of peace and they knew that as soon as war was declared the Frenchmen among them might at any moment be brought under the heel of the French soldiery, while the Englishmen, if they returned home, were in danger of being "pressed" for the English navy. The camp was like a hive of angry bees, every man buzzing about uneasily ready to sting anyone.

Jack had been four days in Pin's when the news came that war had been declared. He immediately made up his mind to cross next day in any craft he could find. He had been away a long time,

and, though he would not acknowledge it to himself, he wanted to get back. He wanted to see his father and Riding, he persuaded himself, but whatever the reason, his village drew him.

As luck would have it next morning he saw the *Dolphin* off the port. An hour later he had Riding at breakfast with him and was listening to all his news.

His sister, it appeared, had married Carrol and was settled down in The Grange. Cecil Barron had died in London and there was mourning at The Court.

Riding was eager to know whether Jack was going to take a hand in the war. Jack told him that for the time being he was resolved to do nothing. In spite of his extraordinary tact Riding ventured to say that Gosport was very eager and had got a big cannon mounted amidships on the brigantine and was aching to try conclusions with any man-o'-war in the French navy. But Jack would not hear of a privateering cruise.

"It's perhaps unfortunate," he said, "but I've too many ties in France. We will talk it all over with my father when I go back."

And therewith Riding had to be content.

CHAPTER III

THE same evening Jack sailed for Hurstpoint, ran in under the Head about midnight and slept in his own bed at the Inn. Next morning to his astonishment when he came down to breakfast his father was not there. Usually the old man got up as soon as it was light.

"Old people," he used to say, "need little sleep." But now he appeared to need a good deal, and even in the mornings he looked fagged and tired.

Jack caught himself wondering often whether he was not much older than he had given himself out to be. In the couple of years since he had married Nancy he had changed from being a hale man, who might have passed for sixty, into an old man who might be seventy-four or five.

Jack told his father what Riding had said to him, but added that he didn't care to go fighting at once. When he saw that his father was not of his opinion he gave it as an excuse that he wanted to wait for the commission which Mr. Fox

had promised him, and his father readily accepted this reason for inaction.

"It's as well to get the commission first," he said with his usual cunning, "for if you do something afterwards, you'll get rewarded. Meantime, you know, a bit of smuggling is always profitable, and it's safe enough. Riding tells me that the brigantine has the heels of any craft he has ever seen, so I think we should add to our nest-egg."

"You love the smuggling," said Jack, amused as always by his father's greed of money, "but what do you mean by 'nest-egg'?"

"Don't you remember?" said his father, "that I am putting another little fortune together for my grand-daughter; it's quite a respectable size by now," he added, smiling.

"Really?" queried Jack in surprise.

"Over ten thousand pounds," said his father, "and growing. Besides three or four thousand pounds' worth of brandy in the Inn, that'll double in price before long."

Jack used his first free afternoon to go to The Grange to visit his sister. He found her settled down in the most matronly way in the world with Carrol; "Frederic," as she called him, with gusto every minute or two.

When Jack told her that he scarcely recognised

his old school mate as "Frederic," having always called him Fred or Carrol, she remarked that the full name was much finer.

"It comes from the German, you know—Friedreich and really means 'rich in peace,' a noble name, I think it."

Jack could not help laughing; she would have plaited the mane and twined ribbons in the tail of the White Horse of Revelations, if he had belonged to her.

But if Emily had blossomed into new life Carrol seemed to have grown more retiring and more self-absorbed than ever. Jack talked to him for some time that afternoon before he would come out of his shell, but as soon as he let himself go Jack found there was more in him than he had suspected, a sort of tremulous sensibility to whatever was most beautiful in art or nature. Suddenly he asked Jack whether he had ever read anything of Blake's and when Jack told him he had never heard the fellow's name Carrol assured him warmly that Blake was one of the greatest of Englishmen; spoke of him in fact with such passionate enthusiasm that he excited Jack's curiosity. He quoted a couple of lines of Blake's that always afterwards remained with Jack as the quintessence of poetry; as discovering indeed

a magic realm of loveliness which Jack had never dreamed of.

> . . . . Let thy west wind sleep on
> The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
> And wash the dusk with silver.

And this fine taste in Carrol was coupled with a very high standard of conduct. He had been trying, it appeared, to turn Gretta Carter from her evil ways; had got her husband work and had given her employment, too, in taking care of the church vestry. Jack found that this pious mission of Carrol was not well looked upon by his sister, who sneered a little at it while maintaining that Gretta Carter didn't interest her.

But all human souls, Jack found, particularly all those who needed care or help, were interesting to her husband. Suddenly he remembered that Margaret had praised Carrol at one time and now he, too, began to regard him with admiration, as one who opened up new spiritual horizons. He promised himself to see more of his old school chum in the future.

Carrol on his side had been interested in Jack by hearing from Margaret that Mr. Fox had expressed his very high appreciation of Jack's ability. In a little while he realised that Jack was

not nearly such a materialist as he had imagined, and at once he began to look on him as a possible convert. He lent Jack one of Swedenborg's works, *Heaven & Hell,* and begged him to take it away with him and study it at his leisure. Jack promised he would do his best, though at the same time he felt certain in his own mind that he would learn more from talking to Carrol than from reading a dozen Swedenborgs.

When on the point of leaving The Grange his sister told him that it was his duty to call at The Court, and Carrol agreed with her. Jack arranged to go up there next day with Emily, and in the afternoon they went.

Margaret came in dressed in black to the very throat; the sombre vestment Jack thought added to the stateliness of her fine figure; she met Jack as if nothing untoward had taken place between them and greeted Emily and asked after Carrol as if she were accustomed to see them every day. But her brother's death had shaken her; now and then when she spoke of her father who was a confirmed invalid or of her mother who had been confined to her room since Cecil's death she had some difficulty in restraining her tears. Jack's heart beat painfully; he would have liked . . . but he had no right . . . had lost indeed what

little right he had . . . and so went on chewing the bitter cud of regret as a man is apt to do.

But if his sister was affected she was not wanting in tact. She inquired very warmly for Lady Barron and insisted upon running up to see her, and so left the two together.

Jack was at a loss. As soon as he found himself alone with Margaret, his sympathy carried him away. He wanted to kiss her, to comfort her, to tell her how much he admired her, how wonderful he thought her, how intensely she appealed to every fibre in him. The way she got up and moved across the room set the pulses in him throbbing. He felt he must restrain himself and make no sign.

Margaret smoothed the way for him. She knew that he had met Mr. Fox again and she wanted to know the result of their talk.

Jack told her that Mr. Fox had promised to send him a commission, but hadn't done it.

Margaret declared that it could only be forgetfulness; Mr. Fox had a very high opinion of him and she advised him to go to London at once and see Mr. Fox. She seemed to take it for granted that Jack wanted to be a king's officer and her calm assumption had its effect on her hearer.

He told her he would certainly write to the

great man, though he hated asking favours. But Margaret saw nothing out of the way in asking for the fulfilment of a promise.

"Do you know?" said Jack, getting up almost at the same moment that Margaret rose, "I find Carrol very interesting. He has a curious thoughtful mind and he believes devoutly now in the religion of his childhood, though he didn't believe in anything much when we were at school together; he has altered astonishingly."

"I didn't know him at all when he was a boy," said Margaret, "but since he came from Oxford first he has always interested me. He's more like a woman than a man," she went on, "very sensitive and imaginative with an extraordinary love of beauty, an extraordinary power, too, of living in the past. He has transformed the church, you know; he's making it almost like a chantry of the Middle Ages—the ages of faith as he calls them."

"I notice," grumbled Jack, "that he talks of the early Christian Church and lecterns and chasubles, and God knows what besides."

"He's a dear and very gifted," said Margaret, perhaps resenting the criticism a little, "and I like him very much; he has been more than kind to me lately. He is good," she added with a decisive air.

The two were before the window looking out on the very terrace where they had walked a few years before.

Without reflection Jack found himself saying: "You cured me of drinking, you know, Margaret; I owe you a great deal," and he held out his hand.

She looked at him with inscrutable eyes, and after a pause gave him her hand. As soon as he felt the cool white hand in his, he knew that this was the reason he had praised her gratefully, that he might touch her. As he lifted her hand to his lips he slid his palm along hers till he held her whole hand; he wondered why kissing it gave him such keen pleasure. As he pushed the sleeve back and kissed her wrist and arm she drew her hand away. He noticed that her cheeks were a little flushed.

A moment or two afterwards his sister came into the room.

A little later the brother and sister took a conventional leave and went down the drive together.

"What did she say to you?" probed his sister.

"Nothing," said Jack.

"I won't help you," threatened his sister, "if you don't pay me by satisfying my curiosity."

"But there's nothing to tell," replied Jack.

His sister shrugged her shoulders: "All right; I know better; but it doesn't matter," and there the matter ended.

For the life of him Jack could not discuss Margaret even with his sister. She was set apart from all other women in his eyes and immeasurably above them, and his meeting with her had an extraordinary effect in quickening and invigorating him; her mere presence helped him; her esteem of him strengthened his self-respect. Everything in her appealed to him, her thoughts, her quick imperious intellect, her beauty. How right she was about Carrol; he was indeed, as she had said, a mystic of extraordinary sensitiveness.

It was the mystic in him which appealed to Jack so intensely, for the sailor's life leads naturally to mysticism. The isolation and danger; the darkness brooding over the waters; the night winds and stars, the solitude that recalls the loneliness of the soul—all predispose to belief; the endless, restless plain of water suggests infinity like the star-sown sky.

Jack would have loved to talk to Margaret as he had never talked to anyone about everything that moved him. The depths in him longed for her, felt sympathy in her. It was not to be.

The pain in him grew. He went on listening to his sister's projects of a new drawing-room and how she intended to get a coachman and put him in livery—"the Carrol livery, you know," she said, "green and silver, with our crest on the buttons. . . ."

As inaction was impossible to him Jack began to get the brigantine in order for a smuggling cruise. He wanted to please his father, and the old man came on board to him two or three times suggesting this or that improvement.

Gosport had made up the crew again to its full complement, though he could always draw on the *Dolphin* and *Mary* for ten or a dozen extra men. A born fighting man, he was full of a new idea.

"Give Chips an order," he said to Jack, "for another brigantine like this and let me fit her out with another sixty-pound gun and we're a match for any Frenchman afloat."

"What do you mean?" cried Jack. "What could you do to a three-decker?"

"Leave all that to me," replied Gosport. "A ship should be a gun carriage and nothing more. A wasp, by God," he went on, "that's the name for them; let's call them the Wasp and the Bee and we'll buzz and sting to some purpose you'll see."

Jack was astonished to find that his father was in favour of the idea, and as soon as they left the ship he insisted on going to Chips' yard.

"Why get another ship?" said Jack. "I don't know that I shall fight yet."

"You ought to have your commission first," said his father, "but that may come any day, and a vessel can't be built under some months. I should like to see you a captain in the King's Navy before I die, and stranger things have happened, mind you," said the old man, "at any rate there is nothing to lose over another brigantine like that; we can always sell her for more than the price we pay Chips."

In spite of Jack's reluctance, the order was given that very day and Chips declared that the Wasp should be better than the Bee in every particular.

From this time on Jack saw a good deal of his father. The old man was continually in Chips' yard or on the brigantine, and one day in the yard he got in a draught, caught a very bad cold and was laid up with lumbago. In spite of attention and good nursing the little weakness would not be shaken off. The old man seemed to get worse and Jack began to grow anxious about him. There was a little fever, the barber-surgeon said,

but nothing particular. In a few days, however, he began to mend rapidly, but he seemed a little shaken. It was his sister who made Jack aware of the fact. She came to him one day and begged him to speak to the father.

The old man was going to a little Methodist chapel, it appeared, on Sundays and had given up the church, and Emily, of course, thought he should come to church and sit under her husband in what she called "the proper church."

Jack wondered vaguely whether that was the chapel he remembered going to with his father in his childhood and one night in the parlour after dinner he asked the old man why he went to chapel.

"I've always belonged to it," he replied.

"Do you believe in the gospel?" cried Jack, for he had never seen in his father's conduct any reference whatever to religious scruples.

"I s'pose I do," replied his father simply. "I don't hurt you by going to chapel, do I?"

"Of course not," Jack explained. "Emily thinks you should go to church because her husband's father is a vicar and her husband is his curate. But of course you have a right to go wherever you want to go."

"I guessed it was something like that," said the

old man. "You see I never believed in the church, never cared for it much; it's too like this world, the best seats in it for the best people, music and singing, painted windows, silks and satins. I like my bare chapel and the plain wooden pews free to all. . . .

"In the church they talk a lot about the God of Love, because their bellies are full, and they want to be happy; in the chapel they tell the truth; they know 'the punishment of sin is death.' . . . 'God has made hellfire for ever, for those who fall or do wrong or are weak.' That's the God I've known all my life in the world. He gives everything to the strong and cunning and greedy and cautious; why? Because he loves 'em; they're his chosen people, the Jews first and the English afterwards; greedy, strong and hard like him. . . .

"I never was afraid of a man much, but I'm often afraid of God. He can get you when you least expect it, though, on the whole, he's been good to me. . . .

"Sometimes I wonder whether God ever knew a good woman; Jesus, you know, had a far better heart than God has. . . ."

Jack looked at him in absolute amazement. The old man's God was like himself, made in his

own image, but larger and darker as our shadow is larger and darker than we are. Was the old man frightened of his own shadow? Did the old wolf tremble in fear at his own shade and howl in dread to the moon, uneasy through the fellowship of his dark companion?

Jack was filled with compassion:

"Don't you see, father," he cried, "that love is stronger than hatred, joy stronger than fear? Love is by far the strongest influence in the world; my mother was really stronger than you are."

"Ha! Ha!" crowed the old man laughing. "I could always make her do whatever I liked."

"Yes," said Jack, "but you loved her, and you can't do things now that would hurt her."

"That's true," said the old man groping, and his hands sought the table again and began the old tattoo which Jack remembered so well. "That's true, but as we get old our childhood comes nearer and nearer to us, and my childhood was all darkness and hunger and fear."

Shaken to the soul with pity, Jack could only take the thin, dry hands in his and hold them fast. . . .

CHAPTER IV

FOR love of adventure and lack of anything better to do, Jack took his father's advice and went smuggling. He sailed first to Bordeaux, but having learnt from a French fisherman on the coast that the hatred of the English had grown to such an extent it would be impossible even to enter the river without being fired on by the forts, he made his way back again to Wimereux and bought what wines and spirits he could find there at the prices current.

He really enjoyed cruising in the brigantine; her speed and seaworthiness pleased the sailor in him at every moment, and the smuggler's camp round Wimereux attracted him as fresh vigorous life always attracts. It interested him to notice that the racial difference or rather the difference of language separated the French and English even when they were always rubbing shoulders in a common pursuit and common danger. He saw, too, that the traffic in a forbidden trade made pariahs of men first and then degraded them.

Most men who break a law, though merely a law of convention, are ripe a month later to break any and every law, however reasonable and just.

Jack could not help noticing the steps by which a hierarchy establishes itself in every community, even among outlaws. In this armed camp the boldest spirits ruled. In nearly every drinking den on the beach quarrels were of hourly occurrence and were often pursued to fatal issues, and the perpetual danger made the life very vivid and interesting. For this reason Jack spent a good deal of time at Pin's and often let Gosport and Riding go backwards and forwards to Hurstpoint without him.

One morning he was told that someone wanted to see him, and to his astonishment Colonel Caressa came in.

Jack went to him with both hands outstretched, but with fear at his heart: "What is it?" he cried.

"Suzanne is dead," replied Caressa simply.

"Dead," cried Jack. "How? Why?"

"She died in childbirth," said Caressa. "Sauvan did his best; we all did our best, but things went badly. The child died next day. Suzanne asked me to see you to give you a few words she had written three or four days before the end, and I

said I would give the letter to you myself. Here it is."

Jack opened it and read:

> Je vais mourir Jack; je le sens, je le sais. On a de ces pressentiments qui ne trompent guère. J'aurais voulu mourir dans tes bras mais tu n'aurais pas le temps de venir: je serai seule. Ah, que c'est affreux d'être seule.
>
> Tu laisseras bébé au petit père, n'est-ce-pas? elle le consolera.
>
> Je te donne mille gros baisers, mon Jack bien-aimé. Oh, que je voudrais te voir encore une fois, une seule fois!
>
> Ca m'ennuie tant de mourir.
>
> Ta petite Suzanne qui t'aime.

Tears poured from Jack's eyes as he read; the pity of it, the forethought, the childish expressions wrung his heart. He felt guilty, too; full of remorse, he might have made her so much happier.

In silence he handed the letter to Caressa and the Colonel read it and handed it back again with quivering face.

"Do you wish to keep the child?" asked Jack.

Caressa nodded: "If you would let me. . . ."

"The house seems empty now. You see Suzanne and you were the only persons I've cared for." Jack's heart went out to the man.

"Of course you shall keep the child. I want to

do whatever Suzanne wished, but now and then you will let me come to see you both, won't you?"

"You'll always be welcome where I am," said Caressa seriously. "You know that, but you won't be able to come to Cherbourg for some time; they all hate the English now, *'perfide Albion,'* you know," and he shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly.

The little Colonel showed no desire to hurry back to the prison; he had always liked Jack intensely and now he seemed to want him more than ever and Jack felt the same pull. The two soon settled down almost like father and son to a life in common.

At first they talked of old times, and Jack heard all the news of Sauvan, Chichet and of Suzanne's illness, but gradually the world about them drew them irresistibly.

If the wild hot life of the camp had interested Jack, it interested the little fighting Colonel ten times as keenly. He was at his best in a row and his position and high courage quickly gave him a unique place among the French smugglers.

He became a sort of arbiter in all the quarrels that sprang up and soon he was as interested in the camp and its passions as if he had been a smuggler himself.

The quarrels among the smugglers which at first had been sporadic and individual had gradually become international, and now involved whole groups. Pin's house was regarded as the English headquarters, mainly because it had been frequented for years by Jack, Rider, Gosport and the others from Hurstpoint, and before Caressa's arrival Jack had been called out more than once at night to put an end to some free fight which had arisen apparently without cause. The English sailors, Jack had to admit, were usually the aggressors; their quarrels were mere fist fights and comparatively harmless; the Frenchmen on the other hand, did not understand fisticuffs; they used knives, and holding together more closely often handled the English severely. Again and again Rider and Jack had proposed a sort of international Court to settle all differences, but the sailors of both nations were too newly accustomed to freedom to submit to any form of authority.

Caressa had been living with Jack a month or two when a row broke out in one of the low drinking-dens almost at the water's edge. It began, as usual, with a quarrel over a girl, and the English sailor tried to end it by knocking his French rival down. In a moment the French

sailors in the place had drawn their knives, and the fight became serious. In five minutes the handful of English were driven out of the café pell mell and immediately ran about collecting new partisans. The fight was renewed on a larger scale, and the English sailors, hopelessly in the minority, were chased up the hill-side to Pin's. Jack came downstairs to stop the tumult and pacify the combatants, but the blood of the Frenchmen was up, and the certainty of victory made them aggressive, and before he knew how it came about Jack was hurled into the café with a long knife sticking in his shoulder.

Once inside the room, however, which could only be entered from the outside by the one door, and so put the minority to a certain extent on an equality with the invaders, the English sailors took up chairs, tore off the table-legs, and stood to it stoutly. Again and again the French were thrust out, and the fight was raging hotly when Caressa rushed into the room, and whipping out his sword posted himself at the door and soon brought his compatriots to reason.

Next morning the little Colonel went about among the French sailors and induced them to choose a committee who would meet a committee of Englishmen and lay down rules for the preser-

vation of order and good fellowship. Before Jack's slight wound was healed the joint committee had been established and was working satisfactorily. The quarrels at once became milder, partly because both parties could hope for immediate, if rough justice, and partly because the whole camp about this time began to be held together by pressure from the outside.

One morning after Jack had recovered from the dig in the shoulder the Colonel began:

"Do you know what's taking place on the height yonder?"

"No," replied Jack, "I'm not much interested in what goes on outside the camp."

"Bonaparte," said Caressa, "is forming a *place d' armes* there for the invasion of England."

"I've noticed a good many soldiers about," Jack admitted, "but they never bother us and we don't interfere with them."

"But now Bonaparte's coming himself," the old man insisted, "things will begin to move. There'll be a hundred thousand men there very soon."

"But how does he propose to get a hundred thousand men across to England?" asked Jack.

"He's going to collect a fleet of flat-bottomed boats I understand," said the little Colonel, "here at Boulogne and at Wimereux, and under the

lee of Cape Grisnez; he'll find a way across, never fear."

Jack smiled; the Colonel's credulous belief in his hero no longer touched him as it had done before he heard Mr. Fox's estimate of the First Consul. Jack no longer believed in Bonaparte's invincibility.

Together they walked up the hill outside the limit of the fishing village and on to the ridge that stretches away to Boulogne. Jack was astounded to find men in every direction labouring with feverish earnestness. Outside the limits of the tented camp which was like a bee-hive abuzz with workers, the Boulonnais had already begun to put up wooden shops, and at every bend in any of the three or four roads that converged on the high plateau there were already wooden cafés filled with soldiers. Here, they came upon a whole regiment of *sapeurs* widening and improving the road; there, another company was making a bridge; a little further on they saw a knot of engineer officers, and to the left in a little hollow the white tents of ten or fifteen thousand soldiers who had already taken up their quarters.

"You see?" cried Caressa.

Impressed in spite of himself Jack replied simply, "I see everything but the wings."

"He'll provide the wings," crowed Caressa, "you'll soon see. He has already overcome all the difficulties in his head."

Jack shrugged his shoulders; discussion even was impossible.

After Caressa had gone back to Cherbourg Jack saw that some of his predictions at least were in a fair way to be realised. The little harbour was gradually taken possession of by French sailors and soldiers; flat-bottomed boats, large and small, arrived in scores; the camp on the heights grew almost as quickly as the days lengthened, and at length Jack felt obliged to return to Hurst-point to see how his countrymen intended to meet the threatened invasion.

He found England aflame with warlike ardour; volunteers had come together in crowds; over two hundred thousand of them had already been supplied with arms, and he felt sure that volunteers who knew the country and were helped by the hedged and narrow English roads could put up a desperate resistance. But England set her chief trust in her navy, and in this showed her good sense. The strait between the two countries was patrolled by British frigates, and British men-o'-war were never far off.

It would be an extremely hazardous, an almost

impossible enterprise Jack saw to attempt an invasion so long as the British held command of the sea.

A private disappointment was more important to him than the impending invasion. He learned from his sister that Sir George Barron was dead and that Lady Barron, out of dislike of The Court, had gone up to London, taking Margaret with her.

"She knows Suzanne's dead," said his sister. "Riding told us months ago when she happened to be here. Riding is devoted to you," she added.

His father and Gosport both tried to interest Jack in the building of the new brigantine, the *Wasp*. They were at the yard every day and they hoped to launch the little craft before the end of the summer.

Brandy and French wine were once more going up in price by leaps and bounds and Jack crossed again to Wimereux to arrange for a large cargo. He found that in the few weeks of his absence the preparations for invasion had made extraordinary progress. Every day now regiments were being practised in embarking on the great flat-bottomed boats which were then rowed out to sea; when they returned, the soldiers were practised in disembarking with the utmost rapidity.

The way the artillerymen got their heavy guns on board and back again excited Jack's admiration. Every engineering detail had evidently been studied with the greatest care, and sailors and soldiers alike were excellent; a spirit of energy and resolution reigned on all sides and the practice seemed to be taken as seriously as men usually take warfare.

Against his will Jack was forced again and again to realise that the spirit of the whole thing was due to the presence of the leader. As soon as Bonaparte returned to Paris for any reason the preparations slacked off; men appeared to lose their keenness; when he returned again, everything was at once keyed up to concert pitch. In spite of himself Jack became interested. The military camp had now grown to such dimensions that everything else was swallowed up as in some huge maelstrom. In the first days of July there were already a hundred thousand men encamped on the heights and fleets on fleets of every description of gunboats and shallow craft filled every harbour and inlet from Cape Grisnez to far south of Boulogne.

One morning an order was given at about six o'clock, and before seven over twenty-five thousand men had been embarked, almost without a

hitch, and twenty-five thousand more were parked about the port waiting for their turn, while the height behind was like a flower bed with tens of thousands of soldiers in varied uniforms.

Everyone turned out to witness the spectacle; suddenly Jack noticed a knot of officers on the height overlooking the scene. They were not half a mile away, and they all formed a background to the one figure who sat on his horse looking down on the brilliant show. *"Bonaparte! Bonaparte!"*

The word flew from mouth to mouth, and the cheering that began on the heights about him spread down in wider and wider volume till it was taken up by the thousands in the harbour and echoed and re-echoed by those already in the boats: *"Vive Bonaparte! Vive le Premier Consul!"*

As Jack turned and followed the cheers to the water he saw in the offing some four or five miles away an English frigate under easy sail; he smiled at the sight with a certain pride. . . .

A few evenings later he was sitting in the Inn when a couple of the French committee came in accompanied by a general.

"Are you English?" the officer asked Jack.

"Yes," said Jack, astonished to hear himself addressed in his own tongue.

"A sailor too?" the general questioned further.

"Yes," replied Jack, still in wonderment.

"I want you to come with our two friends here," the officer went on in French, "to headquarters at Boulogne this evening. General Bonaparte wishes to see you after dinner. Is there anyone else we should have with us?" he asked in French, addressing the two members of the French committee—Lacloche and Gaudin.

"No," said Lacloche, who was a Norman. "I think we three can tell the First Consul anything he wants to know, especially Monsieur Morgan," he added, "for he knows France as well as England."

Jack's appearance seemed to have impressed the officer a little, for he now introduced himself.

"My name's de Vinzel," he said shortly. "I'm a Major General; because I know English pretty well the First Consul sent me to pick out the best men among the smugglers to give him some information. Of course," he added in English, "if you objected to be questioned it might be possible to get someone else in your place."

"I don't object," replied Jack.

"It will be an interesting experience, eh?"

probed the General, looking at him. Jack flushed, feeling himself divined.

He began in turn to study the General; de Vinzel was evidently an interesting personality, a man about middle height, hardly more than thirty years of age, with fine steadfast brown eyes and peculiarly well-cut squarish face. The lines of the forehead were square and the same lines came on down, only getting a little slighter to the jaw. An interesting, handsome man, Jack felt, moved in spite of himself by the quiet meditative regard and courteous reserved manner.

"Why did you think I might object?" asked Jack after a pause.

The question seemed to embarrass the General a little.

"Out of patriotism," he replied at length, "you might hesitate to give information to an enemy of your country." There was an implied reproof in the words which annoyed Jack.

"Who could force me to give such information unless I wished to?" asked Jack.

"General Bonaparte usually gets what he wants," replied de Vinzel. 'He has many means," he added in a curious detached way, almost as if warning his companion.

"You don't like him," said Jack, quickly draw-

ing the inference that the man's cool tone amid the general hero-worship showed rooted dislike.

"I both admire and like him," replied de Vinzel shortly as if he resented the other's frankness. "But let us dine somewhere," he went on in a more friendly manner, "and we shall perhaps come through words to feelings and closer acquaintance."

They dined together, but both were conscious of a wall of separation between them.

Jack was intent on finding out what de Vinzel thought of Bonaparte; and de Vinzel seemed almost as eager to discover what was going on in England. But in spite of the guarded attitude both men preserved they came to feel a certain intellectual sympathy for each other before the dinner was over.

About a quarter past seven de Vinzel got Jack and the two French sailors into a carriage and started for the French headquarters in the old town.

As they drove through the streets Jack was struck by the discipline and order that reigned among the tens of thousands of soldiers who were lodged in and near the town. He was astonished, too, at the Royal state with which the general-in-chief was surrounded. Chamberlains succeeded

officers in the ante-chambers; and the door of the room in which they were finally asked to wait was guarded by two ushers in gorgeous livery.

In ten minutes de Vinzel was sent for, and five minutes later he returned, and with the words "The General will see you at once" led the way to the door.

In spite of himself Jack was considerably affected by the glittering uniforms, the formal ceremony, the deference shown to the great man. As he entered the room his heart beat quickly; he was excited, eager to see the man of whom all Europe was talking: he had only time to notice that the room was large, high and brilliantly lighted, when a little thin man, who had been walking up and down, turned and came quickly toward them. At first Jack saw nothing but a face which looked as if it had been carved in old ivory and imperious, enigmatic eyes. Bonaparte stopped before them while de Vinzel bowed:

"Voici, les hommes, mon Général."

Jack had time to have a good look at him, for the First Consul was intent on examining first Lacloche and then Gaudin. Jack was conscious from their attitudes, though he didn't look at them, that both the sailors were over-awed almost to stupidity; but he had eyes only for Bonaparte.

He was struck at once by the high, challenging nose, which in profile was much more prominent than he had imagined from print or caricature, and the strong, hard jaw and chin. As Bonaparte turned his eyes on him Jack saw that his face was finely balanced; the forehead notably high and broad, owing partly to premature baldness. When their glances met Jack was annoyed to find that he had need of some resolution to endure Bonaparte's hawklike gaze. Almost immediately the general turned from him with impatient haste:

"What have you to tell me?" he asked, curtly, addressing Lacloche. "The matter's simple; here an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men with four thousand boats, there a strait seven leagues wide; how long will it take to get across given calm weather?"

Big Lacloche turned his cap in his hand.

"Mais Monseigneur—" he stammered: "çela dépend—"

"De quoi?" snapped Bonaparte.

"Du temps," he blurted out.

"Imbécile," cried Bonaparte, "I supposed 'calm weather.'"

"And you?" he demanded, shortly, addressing Gaudin; Gaudin looked at Lacloche and flushed

brick-red. It was plain that neither of them had any wits to spare.

"Coglioni," barked Bonaparte in his native Italian, turning from them contemptuously.

"To look at you, one would think you had wits," he added, addressing Jack, sharply. "Can you answer me?"

"Eight to ten hours," replied Jack, "under the most favourable conditions."

"Ha!" cried Bonaparte, interested at once, "those conditions occur once a week I'm told."

"Not nearly so often," Jack replied. "The sea must be quiet for the overloaded, flat-bottomed boats, and there must be a gentle breeze from the East, or you wouldn't get speed enough to carry them across the tide."

"Tide?" exclaimed Bonaparte, "has that to be taken into account, as well as the wind?"

"Certainly," replied Jack, "you must have at least one tide against you."

Bonaparte lifted and dropped his hands impatiently. "God fights for the shopkeepers," he muttered.

Again Jack used the moment Bonaparte spent in thought, to note that he was very thin, and his skin saffron-yellow, though he appeared to be in perfect health. Jack saw, too, that he himself,

though only just average height, was at least three inches taller than the First Consul.

His examination was interrupted by another sharp question:

"How often, in your opinion, will favourable conditions occur?"

"Perhaps a dozen times in the course of the summer," replied Jack.

"The thing's only a ditch, and with a pinch of courage can be jumped," exclaimed Bonaparte, his eyes flaming.

Jack smiled: "The jumper mustn't be hindered."

For one moment Bonaparte's eyes held Jack's; then he turned abruptly to de Vinzel.

"Take those two away; give them a thousand francs apiece: wait till I ring."

De Vinzel took Lacloche and Gaudin from the room, while Bonaparte waited immobile as stone. Jack felt that something decisive was coming, yet he couldn't help studying the man before him instead of thinking of his own position. Bonaparte was half turned aside. Jack noticed now that he had thrust his right hand into his coat and looked exactly like Prudhon's famous picture; the head bent forward almost on his chest, the prone brow, the withdrawn eyes. He noticed, too, the First

Consul's dress; the long green coat buttoned high on the chest, with red collar and red facings; the white waistcoat and white breeches, skin tight, that fitted into high, soft boots—boots *à la Saxe,* as they were called: the uniform of the *Chasseurs à Cheval* of the Guard: this man was always a soldier.

Even after the door closed behind de Vinzel, Bonaparte remained some little time without speaking. Slowly he turned on Jack searching, inscrutable eyes, and began in a quiet, impressive way.

"There's an English frigate always in view: that's what you meant: is she alone?"

"I don't know that I ought to answer," Jack replied, as quietly, "but I suppose you know: she is and she isn't."

"Lord Keith has ships within call," inferred Bonaparte quickly, "but his fleet could be overpowered; we've a hundred ships of war in the harbour here already."

"Nelson's behind Keith," said Jack.

"He could be outwitted."

Jack lifted his brows and was silent.

"You're an Englishman?" Bonaparte darted the question at him.

Jack shrugged his shoulders: "I suppose so."

"Where did you learn French?"

"In your prison at Cherbourg," Jack answered; "I married the niece of Colonel Caressa," he added.

"Caressa!" cried Bonaparte, "I remember him well, a fine soldier! Then you are half French," he went on, his eyes now shining on Jack's, irradiating kindness. "Come, come," he said familiarly, "you'll tell me what I want to know," and he came close to Jack, tapping him the while with his forefinger on the chest.

"I want to know," he repeated, "you see I put my cards on the table," he broke off, "now I know I'm speaking to a relative of Caressa: I want to know whether it is possible to get that English frigate and the English fleet behind it out of the way for twelve hours on one of those occasions when you say the conditions will be favourable for crossing?"

"That wouldn't help you," replied Jack. "You must have control of the sea or the risk would be too great: England lends itself to defence."

"Control of the sea?" repeated Bonaparte as if doubtful, "none of my admirals will promise me that: is it possible?"

For a while Jack thought without finding a way out of the difficulty, then, putting himself in

Bonaparte's place and endowing himself with his power, the solution of the problem came to him:

"Quite possible for next summer," he replied, "but not at once."

Again Bonaparte's eyes became inscrutable and held him.

"You are a sailor," he snapped, "and know the conditions; you are sure?"

"Quite sure."

"Of course it is!" exclaimed Bonaparte. "I, too, was sure it was possible. I've wanted to meet a sailor with brains for a long time. Tell me your plan?" he added simply.

"I can't," said Jack, pulling himself free from the searching eyes; and the next moment was angry with himself for shrinking from the scrutiny.

"I'm English," he added, "and I've fought against you."

"But you were treated properly; you were set free; you married a Frenchwoman; you're half a Frenchman," cried Bonaparte, with singular rapidity. . . .

Still Jack shook his head, meeting the eyes now fairly, though for a moment he had the sensation of the fencer when his opponent is about to lunge in.

The next moment the intent look vanished from

Bonaparte's face, the cloud of thought and anger cleared magically:

"Why shouldn't you be French altogether, mon ami?" he smiled. "I reward talent, insight, genius more than anyone ever rewarded it," he added, hastily. "You're a smuggler at variance with your own country, almost an outlaw: be a Frenchman, help me with your special knowledge, and I will do anything you wish for you, reward you in any way you may choose."

Jack stood motionless, but could hardly help smiling. England had refused to consider him as the equal of the youngest French officer, England still in spite of Fox's pleading denied him a commission, yet—

"Come, come," said Bonaparte, and his eyes were kindly and his voice had an infinite persuasiveness in it. "I don't know the reward you'd wish; tell it me; I am not a shopkeeper you'll find; I don't huckster and misprize rare gifts. Are you poor?" he went on quickly.

Jack shook his head.

Napoleon threw his hands up in the same impatient gesture.

"Help me; choose the reward you please; it shall be yours."

Jack remained silent.

"Wouldn't it be better," said Bonaparte, slowly, "for you to be a French admiral; to go back to Cherbourg with absolute power, and reorganize our Northern fleet than go on as an English smuggler? Think," he said, "I left Corsica for France because the field was larger, the reward higher. Why shouldn't you leave England for France for the same reason?"

Bonaparte believed that Jack was hesitating, and at once tried to play on another string.

"England hasn't treated you over well," he went on, "or you would never have been a smuggler. What loyalty do you owe the petty shopkeepers who fight like dogs without knowing why they're fighting, who ill-treat all their best men like Fox and yourself, and prefer preposterous little lordlings, parasites and pedants to men of original force and talent?"

Still Jack didn't answer. It was all true, he felt, all true, and the classing him with Fox sent warm blood leaping through his veins.

"What kindness do you owe those who ill-treat you and underrate you?" the persuasive voice went on: *"Ubi bene est, ibi patria:* That's one of the scraps of Latin that has stuck in my memory."

Jack struggled not to yield: what was it Fox had

said: "One doesn't turn against one's mother." He shook his head: "I'm sorry——"

Bonaparte cut him short.

"Don't make up your mind at once," he said; "important decisions need reflection, careful thought" (his sentences fell like bullets): "great opportunities do not occur often: great men need great lieutenants. You're sure," he probed him again, "it's possible to win the mastery of the sea in half a year?"

Jack nodded, his eyes lighting up: "Sure!"

"I knew it," cried Napoleon, as if to himself, "all things are possible to a brain that knows the conditions."

"Think it over," he went on, "I'm glad to know Caressa's son-in-law; the Colonel will have told you that I am not ungrateful," he added, smiling, "and if you help me in this, he shall judge between us."

Jack realised that when he chose this man could be winning. His smile was full of kindness, his manner had a familiar courtesy in it that was fascinating.

The next moment Bonaparte turned to the usher who had entered:

"Send General de Vinzel to me," he said, quietly.

Before Jack had time to think de Vinzel came into the room.

"General," said Bonaparte to him, "this gentleman and I have had a talk, and I hope to have many more with him. He's half French, I find. Please take care of him? See that he is well cared for?"

"Oh, Mon Général," Jack broke in, replying to Bonaparte, "I am staying at Pin's café at Wimereux; if you will allow me to go back there, I shall always be at hand if I'm wanted."

"The carriage in which we came," added de Vinzel, "is still waiting, and the two sailors are ready to return with this gentleman."

"As you will," decided Bonaparte, "if you'll wait for five minutes," he added, smiling, while waving Jack to the door, "I have something to say to the General, and he will go with you."

"Bon soir," he added, smiling his dismissal, "bon soir, mon ami, et au revoir," and the interview was over.

Jack went into the next room with his thoughts and emotions in a whirl. He wanted to arrange them, to come to some definite conclusion.

Bonaparte was a great man: that he felt certain of. Fox hadn't been fair to him. Why? Probably because Bonaparte was too imperious,

too quick; assumed superiority at once. But he had rare force and persuasiveness—the touch of familiarity was the subtlest flattery. . . .

"Do I feel the speed and power and charm of the man so intensely?" he next asked himself, "because I'm inferior to Fox?"

Fox's words came back to him: "Bonaparte could probably strike quickly and relentlessly." He meant perhaps that Bonaparte was effective because he was narrow, a torrent held to purpose by stone banks. He had underrated the man.

Judging himself and others in this way Jack never even thought of the difference of age and its effects. He had realised that Fox was a master of words, astonishingly articulate. He could not expect to be the equal of a master in this field who had perfected his gift in twenty years of constant practice. He was struck by Bonaparte's mastery of men and command of motives but he never took into account that Bonaparte had been using his instruments now for ten years? Jack's ability showed itself in weighing such men. Though he felt their superior talents acutely, he was not really cast down by them.

He knew that he must now make up his mind what he would do; he felt the importance of the decision. Napoleon would keep his word, of that

there could be no doubt; he would not hesitate to make him an admiral at once, give him power to boot, and judge him by his achievements. More no one could want: life seemed to open before him with unlimited horizons; the scales dropped from his eyes. He knew of a surety that if he were in command at Cherbourg for three or four months, he could fit out a host of Wasps, a thousand of them that would sweep the British fleets from the sea; half a dozen or a dozen Wasps against each battleship; every Wasp able to choose her own distance, able to strike without being struck again —the result was certain.

The hot blood poured through him in triumph: he thrilled with joy. It was the old story of the Armada over again, three or four little English ships to one big Spaniard, the English ships having no advantage but speed and alertness. Every Spanish giant taken would be a triumph, whereas when a little English ship went down no one would notice it; it wouldn't count: victory must always be with the Wasps. Besides the small ships make the best sailors, and it's the sailors win battles.

Throbbing with exultation he realised that in mind already he had created a new navy—an invincible fleet at a minimum of cost. He could do

all Bonaparte wanted, and more, much more. After Bonaparte he would be the first man in France. He could make the French fleet as powerful as the French army. His thoughts towered; instinctively he turned and walked resolutely to the door. If Bonaparte had come to him then the result might have been different. But Bonaparte had many things to do and, as the door opened, de Vinzel came in.

"You?" cried Jack, with a spasm of disappointment.

"At your service," said de Vinzel, quietly. "I have sent the sailors back," he went on, "I want to have a talk with you—a long talk."

Jack nodded. De Vinzel led the way out of the room.

CHAPTER V

JACK followed de Vinzel almost without thought of where he was going or why. He was living in the new realm of his own imagining. Was it for this gorgeous conception of a new fleet, he wondered, that he had been born, just for this that he had been trained for years and years as a seaman; for this that he had met Gosport and given him the chance of showing what could be done? How simple it all was: it was the lesson of all warfare to strike without being struck back, and the other lesson was just as weighty, that one man, one thought might be more important than a whole navy and a hundred thousand trained seamen.

Jack was to learn more still before this memorable evening came to an end.

Following de Vinzel, he went through a long corridor, which evidently led into another house. Suddenly his guide threw open a door and ushered him into a pleasant, small room with many books in it and two or three portraits.

"My quarters," de Vinzel began, "take a seat, won't you? and let's have a talk."

Mechanically Jack sat down and de Vinzel drew up opposite him.

"General Bonaparte thinks very highly of you," said de Vinzel, "he told me to say so. He believes that you know how to get rid of the British fleet and how to win mastery of the sea."

Jack smiled, still glowing.

"It's true, then?" de Vinzel went on, with quick interest lighting up his face.

Jack nodded: "The certainty came to me," he confessed, "when Bonaparte talked of making me a French admiral, and giving me command in Cherbourg over the Northern French fleet. Till then I didn't see my way. He told me to choose my own reward, but a man's real reward," he added, "is the opportunity to do big things."

"I see," exclaimed de Vinzel, "he uses persuasive arguments."

Jack felt a certain reproof in his tone which he scarcely understood.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Are big things always the best things, I wonder? or are they sometimes bad, and better left undone?" replied de Vinzel, quietly.

"Good or bad," retorted Jack, "they always tempt one, and there's satisfaction in the doing."

De Vinzel's brows went up disdainfully:

"You don't agree with me," cried Jack, "tell me exactly what you think, won't you?"

"Many things," replied de Vinzel, "which I hardly know how to make plain, and yet which I believe I ought to lay before you.

"Have you resolved to yield to the persuasion, and do what General Bonaparte wishes?" he asked.

Recalled to himself by the direct question, Jack hesitated.

"I have not decided," he replied, "but if I had the power for six months I could do big things. That tempts me—not the reward, nor the honours."

De Vinzel nodded: "Yet you still hesitate?"

"I still hesitate," replied Jack; "it's hard to turn against one's country," he added, as if forced to explain.

Again de Vinzel nodded, and silence came upon the two; though their eyes met more than once.

"I wonder," said de Vinzel, "if I talked about myself whether you would understand: I'm going to try, if I don't bore you," he added.

"No, no," replied Jack, "you interest me hugely. I shall be glad to hear."

"I'm a Breton," de Vinzel began, "and was brought up in a little manor house on the coast by my mother; trained devoutly as a Catholic, taught to love the church, and to honour the king; surrounded the while with such indulgent love and tenderness as few men ever know. Whatever I am or whatever I may become I owe to my mother.

"In spite of all her care and all the teaching," he went on, "I began at sixteen or seventeen to think for myself, and soon came to doubt everything I had been taught. Before the opening of the Revolution, already in 1788, I was a revolutionary—a revolutionary at eighteen with a devout mother, who was horrified by the mere notion of the common people attempting to speak before the clergy and nobles and king——"

After a pause he began in another tone: "I came to believe in my judgment a little," he resumed, "because I continually foresaw event after event that afterwards took place. I knew the Girondists were doomed because of their moderation, while everyone looked upon them as extremists: I foresaw the victory of the Jacobins; only one mistake I made. I believed in Mirabeau and

Danton as in Elijah and Elisha, and it was Robespierre and Bonaparte who won, perhaps because they desired power more than the others.

"For my mother's sake," he went on, "I could take no hand in the game so long as she lived, but she died suddenly, when I was twenty-five, and at once I astonished the *curé* and all my friends by taking up arms for the republic. They had all expected that I would be a 'chouan.' I preferred to fight under General Marceau—a great man," he went on, "as great perhaps as the First Consul!"

"Why, then, did Bonaparte rise above all the others?" asked Jack.

"Surely the explanation's simple," cried de Vinzel. "In his youth he saw Paoli make himself master of Corsica; he fought for him and he fought against him, and was beaten. Bonaparte learned from Paoli how easy it is for a General to make himself a despot, and he set himself to follow Paoli's example on a larger stage."

"That's probably true," said Jack. "Is he a marvellous general?"

"A very good general," replied de Vinzel, quietly; "but hardly more; it seems to me a great general must invent something new, a new arm like the long spears which Philip and Alexander

gave the Macedonians, or a new formation like the Roman legion; but Bonaparte has not had to invent anything; and yet has conquered everywhere, simply because he had the force and passion of the revolution behind him. . . .

"All nations were affected by our declaration of the brotherhood of man; 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' have carried the French arms from victory to victory. In Italy our soldiers were welcomed everywhere, and even in the villages on the Rhine we were cheered, but as soon as men come to see that Napoleon is merely fighting for himself the result will be different."

Jack was curiously interested; this man seemed to be looking down on events from a height: he nodded encouragement and de Vinzel went on:

"I cannot help believing that the Right must triumph: my pious mother in me I suppose. Had Bonaparte contented himself with organizing the spirit of the Revolution how much greater he would have been. But always there's the insane excess in him. After the great Italian Campaign of 1796, the insane dream of an empire in the east, and the fiasco of Egypt. After his admirable work as First Consul: his codifying of the laws: his foundation of the splendid University system, this insane expedition against England.

His ambition is selfish and insatiate, and his love of risk is the mark of the gambler.

"How much longer will he last? That's the question. I should despair of everything, of God and good, if he went without defeat."

"Why don't you leave him?" asked Jack, in amazement.

"There is a leaven of real wisdom in him," replied de Vinzel, "he has done a great deal for France: these new trunk roads he's making are fine, and he intends, I hear, to bring the forest lands under wise central administration; he's a great organiser, and industrial France needs him: for feudal France is dead.

"I was very eager to see," he went on after a pause, "whether you would be tempted to fight for him. You will not, I think. That means the tide is already turning against him. Had he been unselfish enough," he added, "he might have won you and perhaps with you the mastery of the seas."

"I might have been killed," said Jack, shrugging his shoulders, "on my way to Cherbourg."

"Of course," cried de Vinzel, "there's room for the sceptical argument: there is no rule without its exception, water does not always reach its

level: but that's the tendency; Right is always clothing itself with Might as with a garment. . . .

"Here we two are," he said, stretching out his hands to Jack, "both of us in much the same difficulty: I wishing to fight for France and modern ideas am engaged under Bonaparte, who, I am afraid, is about to play Emperor and make himself a despot. I'm uncertain how far I ought to go with him. And you've got much the same trouble, only you must make up your mind at once while I have time."

"It's made up," said Jack, "though I should like power, like to create a great fleet, I cannot fight against England. I think," he said, rising, "I had better get back to Pin's."

De Vinzel looked at him with cordial liking in his eyes, then suddenly he put his hand on his arm and spoke with peculiar impressiveness: "Further than Pin's, my friend," he said.

"What do you mean?" asked Jack.

"You will cross to England to-night," said de Vinzel, "if you're wise, immediately I leave you. Don't waste a moment. Bonaparte has other means of persuasion," he added, "if rewards won't make you speak, punishments might."

"You don't mean——?" cried Jack.

"I mean he killed Enghien in cold blood," re-

plied de Vinzel; "it's safer for you, much safer to cross to-night."

"I am to conduct you to Pin's," he went on in his ordinary tone, "and see you in safety there; those are my orders. I shall not go an inch beyond them. . . . Sometime or other I hope we may meet again," he added.

The two walked in silence up the long hill: when they reached the top de Vinzel began:

"I think you ought to know what Bonaparte told me about you."

"If the Englishman has a sound plan," he said, "and can really win for us the mastery of the sea, he'll do it. If he refuses, it is because he can't do it. No one could resist the rewards I offered him; no one in his senses: I know men."

"Bonaparte," de Vinzel went on, "seems incapable of understanding high, unselfish motives and, my belief is," he added in his impressive way, "that those motives are certain sooner or later to bring him to ruin."

Jack heard him with a sort of awe: he hadn't the older man's certainty of faith; but he felt that what de Vinzel said was more than likely to be true. It was as if he had heard a law formulated for the first time which yet found an immediate echo in his own soul and implicit acceptance. With

thoughts in mind deeper than words the two came at length to Pin's and said "Good-night" at the door. As de Vinzel turned to walk away he cried out: *"au revoir,"* and was gone into the darkness. Jack watched him disappear with mingled feelings of wonder and sympathy. What an extraordinary man. Were there many Frenchmen so wise and clear-sighted? Hardly. If such men as de Vinzel ever came to power war would cease. . . .

Five minutes later he was in the little harbour, had roused up a couple of fishermen, and with them an hour later had sailed for Hurstpoint.

CHAPTER VI

ALL the way across Jack's mind was at work. First he went over every detail of his talk with Bonaparte. He had in his mind, so to speak, a series of photographs of him which all coalesced gradually into one impression,—a carven marble face, all lines and sharpest decision, a challenging, imperious nose, hard, inscrutable eyes and mitigating these an affectionate human voice—"mon ami." A quick, keen, resolute man not without many kindly virtues; but de Vinzel was right, the great pull of the world was against him, which was after all another way of saying what Fox had said—that vanity, naked self-esteem was the rock on which Bonaparte might founder. Suddenly the thought came into Jack's mind with a shock that Fox was perhaps as great a man; true, he had petty aristocratic insolences about him and prejudices that the First Consul hadn't got. Bonaparte, Jack felt, was simpler, more human. But Fox was full of laughing kindness, too, a rich, bold, generous nature: who could say which was the greater?

And de Vinzel? a sort of fanatic of the Revolution and of the Right: a fine product. De Vinzel reminded him in some ways of Carrol. It struck him that Carrol and Fox were the English equivalents of de Vinzel and Bonaparte: the Frenchmen freer of prejudice, more modern in spirit and aim; the Englishmen more whimsical: on this side the amateur talents, so to speak, on that, the professional artists in life. That was what the French Revolution had done, lifted France nearer to the ideal, made her more modern than England. Would she keep her advantage?

As soon as they got well to the south of the patrolling English frigate they steered across and next night Jack was landed at Hurstpoint. After a long sleep in his own little room he hurried downstairs to see his father and tell him all about the First Consul. What would his father say to Bonaparte's offer?

After breakfast the two went out for a walk and Jack told his father what Bonaparte had said.

"Why didn't you take his offer?" asked the older man, stopping in blank surprise.

"I couldn't," said Jack, "he's fighting now for his own hand."

"That's what you ought to fight for," cried his

father; "that's what everyone in this world fights for. If he had offered me such a chance, wouldn't I have jumped at it? What's England to you? What has she ever done for you?"

"A great deal," said Jack, "more than we can ever estimate. At any rate, I refused," he added.

"The more fool you," said the old man drily. Jack took hold of his father's arm, laughing gaily: "You don't even know," he cried, "whether I could have done what Bonaparte wanted?"

"I know you could have done better than anyone he can get," replied his father, stoutly, "and you'd have had the reward. I've no patience with your scruples."

"Come, come," Jack replied, "you know you always say I have too much of my mother in me: in your heart that's why you like me."

The old man stopped and looked at him quizically with his keen grey eyes: "Perhaps it is," he said, smiling grimly; "but as you've made up your mind," he went on, "I may give you something now that has come for you," and he took an official letter out of his pocket with O. H. M. S. printed on the cover and another smaller packet franked.

"Your commission I expect," added his father.

Jack tore it open and found that the old man

had guessed right. It was his commission and, when he opened the smaller packet, he found it was a letter from Fox.

It ran:

> DEAR SIR:
>
> I take shame to myself for so long neglecting my promise to you. But I can hardly repent of my fault as it brought me the acquaintance of a very charming woman, who takes more interest in you than in a wilderness of Foxes.
>
> Miss Barron has reminded me of my promise to get you a commission, and assured me that you deserved it, and I believe her. I hope you will do great things with it, and change it for one of higher rank, very quickly.
>
> The gout is in my hands or I might write more.
>
> Your obedient servant,
> CHARLES J. FOX.

"Now," said Jack to his father, pocketing the letter, "let us get down to Chips and see if the brigantine is ready. I'm eager to see," he went on, "whether if I had accepted Bonaparte's offer I should have been successful or not. We'll soon try my idea against a French ship."

"The new brigantine is all ready," said his father, "except for her guns, and Gosport is at Portsmouth getting the very biggest cannon he can find for both vessels. He's been gone now

over a month, and I expect him back every day."

When they got to the harbour Jack was delighted to see the two brigantines floating side by side: the new vessel was some forty feet longer than the old, with higher masts and doubtless a far larger spread of canvas. Nothing would do on this very first day but that he should take both vessels out for a cruise and see which was the faster. He was delighted to find his father entering at once into the spirit of the race with the zest of a young man.

"Let me have the little *Dolphin,*" the old man cried, "you take the new brigantine, the *Wasp,* and let Riding take out the *Bee,* and money on it I'll beat you both round a forty mile course."

Jack looked up at the sky and then burst out laughing. It was settled summer weather, with a light breeze of only five or six knots an hour. It was very possible that his father would win in the small cutter, for the light air suited her better than it suited the larger vessels. The old man, too, had chosen the course in order that he might start at least with an advantage. He also stipulated that each of them should set off as soon as he could, knowing that that was pretty sure to give him quite five minutes' start. They met Rid-

ing on the quay, but his father wouldn't stop to discuss anything with Riding.

"Everyone for himself, my boy: I'm going to start as soon as I can. You settle it with Riding as you like," and in two minutes he had got into a boat and was being pulled off to the *Dolphin*.

In a few seconds Jack told Riding what had been resolved and sent him off on board the *Bee*.

When he himself reached the *Wasp* he found that she was somewhat short-handed. Still, the score of sailors that were on board were of a good class, and as soon as Jack stepped on deck he found himself face to face with Weetman, who was now boatswain. In a few words he told him what was on foot, and sent him forward to get the sails set. As his men tumbled up the hatchway Jack saw that the little *Dolphin* had already slipped her moorings and hoisted her jib, and with her mainsail half set was drawing out of the harbour.

He grinned with delight at this evidence of his father's keenness.

Riding, too, was using the big crew of the *Bee* for all they were worth. Before Jack had got the first sail set he saw the *Bee* passing him under a cloud of canvas on her way after the *Dolphin*. Jack soon realised that he was at many disadvan-

tages. The ropes were all new, and as soon as the sails felt the wind all the tackle began to stretch. Again and again he had to make the men tauten up this shroud and sheet and take an extra pull on that halyard. But as soon as they were out of the harbour, he realised that the *Wasp* was very fast. The *Dolphin* had had quite ten minutes' start, and was a mile away, a white-winged bird creeping up to windward and already probably weatherly enough to round the first buoy. Then came the *Bee* about half a mile ahead, and last of all the *Wasp*.

On the first lap the *Wasp* outsailed the *Bee* easily and came round the buoy before her. But the little *Dolphin* had almost held her lead, and was still perhaps some three-quarters of a mile in front. She had rigged out a great square sail, too, and was doing well, even before the wind.

Jack saw that his father was his only real antagonist. But as soon as the *Wasp* was put before the wind she began to show her speed. In half an hour she had overhauled the *Dolphin* and then slid quickly past her and went on alone. The crew led by Weetman gave a great cheer, which the Dolphin's re-echoed with challenge.

Shortly after Jack had got ahead he began to hope that something might take place in order

that his father might win. Curiously enough chance began to favour the old man. In the full heat of the day the wind dropped to a mere air and the lighter vessel crept up on the leader, foot by foot. It was almost a drifting match from one o'clock to four, when the brigantine rounded the second buoy, with the *Dolphin* a few hundred yards behind. Here for half an hour the wind seemed to cease altogether, and, to Jack's amusement, his father got out oars and set his crew to work to row the little *Dolphin*. He was not going to be beaten if he could help it. In half an hour more the *Dolphin* caught and passed them with a cheer.

In another half hour she was well ahead, and when the breeze sprung up it came off the land, and it was in vain that Jack sailed the *Wasp* as well as he could. The little *Dolphin* entered the harbour a hundred yards or so before him, and as she picked up her anchor her crew, led by his father, cheered again and again, and Jack led cheers in return.

To Jack's amusement his father took his victory quite seriously. He protested that he had a right to use oars or anything else, and he advised Jack quite gravely to put five or six big sweeps on board the brigantine.

"In a calm," he said, "it might make all the difference to you. The wise man profits by every lesson."

The race had been delightful, and Jack never forgot it. . . .

Being impatient to get to sea he did his best to hasten Gosport's return by sending Riding to Portsmouth to hurry him up, and in the meantime he betook himself to the Grange and told Carrol about his interview with Bonaparte and his talk afterwards with de Vinzel.

To his surprise Carrol took it all as providential.

"No such thing as chance in the world," he declared, his faith excluding doubt. "It is all ordained," he said, "or, as I prefer to call it, the will of God. Sooner or later even the Bonapartes will see that selfish ambition is as silly as eating or drinking too much."

In a few days Gosport returned with the heaviest guns he could find, two sixty pounders; in a week he had fitted them on the two brigantines. Day by day, too, the men he had engaged in Portsmouth came dropping in so that the *Wasp* had her full complement of eighty men before the end of the week, while there were seventy on board the *Bee*.

One quiet summer evening Jack gave the order to cast off, and Weetman called up the crew to slip the anchor and set sail. Slowly the brigantine drew out of the little cove, followed by the *Bee*. Everyone seemed to feel the importance of the occasion, for Weetman raised his best chanty:

On Gosport beach I landed, a place of noted fame,
I called for a bottle of brandy to treat my young flash game,
Her outside ribbons were all silk, her spencer a scarlet red,
We spent the day in sweet content, and at night we went to bed.
Repeat: "And at night we went to bed."

After the first verse had been sung Gosport answered the challenge with the famous man-o'-war song:

When I was young and scarce eighteen, I was a roaring blade,
And many's the little flirt I had with many a fair young maid;
But, my parents said it would not do for me to waste their store,
So soon they shipped me off to sea, on board of a Man-o'-War.

Chorus:

Right fol the rol the riddle; right fol the rol the ray;
Right fol the rol the riddle; right fol the rol the ray.

It was to the strains of this chorus that the crew tailed on to the halyards and ran the sails up in double quick time.

In spite of himself Jack's heart was beating as it had never beaten on any previous cruise: he was eager to bring his theory to the final test. Every day he exercised his crew in setting and taking in sail, and smartened them up by competition between the vessels and against time: every day, too, Gosport on the *Wasp* practised shooting for an hour or two at a moving barrel against Newton on the *Bee*. Occupied in this way the two vessels reached the Bay all too quickly. Jack hoped to meet a brig or corvette on its way up from some Spanish port perhaps with orders. He knew that a naval fight at this time would make a stir, for all England was tingling with fear of invasion, and a decisive victory at sea would be taken as an omen. For weary days and weeks he patrolled the Bay from Cherbourg to the Spanish coast and back again; but after a month or so he had to return without capturing anything better than a couple of fishing craft, which he restored to the owners on finding that the French fishermen knew nothing of the movements of their own men-o'-war.

Somewhat crestfallen, Jack returned to Hurst-

point to clean the bottoms of his ships and give his crews a week or so on shore with fresh provisions. In a fortnight they were in the Bay again, but the weather had altered. One evening the clouds banked up about the setting sun and the old promise of a westerly wind to follow was soon fulfilled; about four bells it began to blow hard.

Jack made the *Wasp* snug and kept within a quarter of a mile of the *Bee*. By morning the strong breeze had stiffened to a gale: evidently they were in for the first of the equinoctials. Just as eight bells went, the mast-head watch hailed—"a full rigged ship on the lee bow." In an hour they saw she was a French frigate and a large one. Jack could not make up his mind to get out of her way, though even Gosport warned him that they would be at a disadvantage with their one big gun against the frigate's broadside with such a sea running.

"Our gun-carriage, Sir," he said, "is not so steady as theirs, and with only one gun at long bowls we may miss a good many times."

But Jack simply could not run away and leave the chance untried. If the odds in his favour were as great as he believed, he must win sooner or later.

In another hour they were within two or three

miles of the frigate and could see her plainly. Suddenly a suspicion crossed Jack's mind:

"She looks very much like the frigate that took us," he said, handing the glasses to Gosport. "What do you think?"

In a moment Gosport put the glass down.

"It is the *Inflexible,*" he said, "forty guns—all thirty-two pounders."

"We must have a slap at her," cried Jack, "tit for tat is good for everyone."

Meanwhile the frigate came steadily on under all her lower canvas, paying no attention whatever to the two small craft that kept drawing towards her with the weather gauge. Suddenly Jack ran up the English colours and Gosport fired the big gun. In a moment the frigate had triced up her ports and replied with a broadside that fell short: the triangular duel had begun.

All through the day they pounded the frigate without intermission. But the French Captain was a brave fellow, and while the fight was going on he had his carpenters up repairing damages. At about four o'clock in the afternoon Jack told Gosport to aim at the rigging.

At about six o'clock Newton carried away the frigate's main royal mast, and while the big ship was disabled Jack ran as near her stern as he

dared and fired again, raking her. As luck would have it this shot brought down her foremast. The Frenchman at once fell away and let him have a broadside, but the shots did little damage.

All the evening the French crew were at work getting sail on a jury foremast that they had rigged up; and as soon as night fell the frigate turned tail and began to run before the wind for the French coast.

About midnight the word came aft that the Frenchman was hove to, no doubt with the hope of getting the two ships close enough to give them each a broadside; but Jack went about in the *Wasp* at once and signalled to the *Bee,* and both began pumping in the heavy shots again, and the Frenchman soon found that his best course was to run for it.

With the first grey streak of dawn Jack began the cannonading again, and now almost alternately first the *Wasp* and then the *Bee* pummelled the French frigate. By eight bells that day she was a sorry sight. An hour later the tricolour came slowly fluttering down from her peak.

"Out with the gig," Jack cried, "let's save our prize."

"Don't risk it, sir," cried Gosport. "Let Riding board him and we'll hang off."

"I'm going aboard," said Jack, "you and Riding will keep us in sight."

He saw that the gale had nearly blown itself out. The frigate was in a pitiable condition: of a crew of over three hundred men she had lost a hundred and twenty killed and wounded. The big shots had done tremendous damage. All the boats were knocked to pieces, ten of the forty cannon dismounted, the lower deck a shambles.

The captain he found was an old seadog of fifty years of age called Chauchard. Needless to say Jack treated him with more than courtesy, showing, indeed, to him and to the rest of the officers every possible consideration. He regretted only that he had not got a single doctor on board either of his vessels. But the French ship had a good surgeon and two assistants, and the wounded were soon made as comfortable as possible.

By six o'clock in the evening the frigate was ready to sail again, and the wind had fallen: Jack transferred fifty seamen to the French ship and, by promising a hundred of the French crew to give them their liberty if they would give him their parole to work and not attempt to escape, he got the frigate running free towards the English coast with the two smaller vessels on her weather quarter.

Jack had hardly got on board the *Wasp* again when it came to him that he hadn't slept for forty-eight hours, and he went down to his cabin and never awoke till the sun was high. As he dressed himself he could not help looking through the porthole to see the frigate—the outward and visible sign of his triumph.

As soon as he had breakfasted he got himself put on board and had a long talk with Captain Chauchard. He found him an excellent sailor and a man with a fund of common sense. He talked quite freely and Jack learned a good deal from him. He declared that the Revolution which had made the French army had destroyed the French navy.

"How did it do that?" asked Jack in amazement.

"Seamanship is a thing," said Chauchard, "that cannot be learnt in a month or a year. It's about the most difficult trade on earth. It takes an apprenticeship in childhood and eight or ten years of practice. Well we used to have that; the officers on board our vessels were nearly all nobles, that was why I was only a subordinate," he said, simply. "In the Revolution all the officers were guillotined as aristocrats; that would not have hurt us perhaps if the authorities had picked out

the best common sailors and made them officers, but instead of that they sent middle class people on board, captains who had never been to sea, lieutenants who didn't know the mizzen mast from the jib-boom. They had to make me a captain," he added, "because I was the only officer on board who did not get seasick. No wonder your Nelson beat us. If Bonaparte had been a seaman instead of an artillery officer the result would have been different. Look at this *Inflexible*," he said; "my first lieutenant is the son of an advocate of Bordeaux. When he gives orders he makes all the sailors laugh."

"I am rather glad of it," said Jack, courteously, "for if they had all been as good as you I should probably never have won."

"Oh, no," said Chauchard, "you have taught us all a lesson, and if I ever get back to France I shall try to make the French authorities realise that a couple of *Wasps* are more than a match for a forty-gun frigate."

How was it, Jack asked himself in wonder, how was it that Bonaparte, with his quick vision, had never gone on board his ships himself and found out the reason of the indisputable superiority of the English? The more he thought of it the more he saw that Fox was right. There was no depth

of sympathy and therefore no width of vision in Bonaparte; he was a clear, decisive man, as Fox had said, who could strike sharply but hardly more.

An hour later Riding came on board.

"Whoever would have believed it?" he cried, when he looked at the broad deck of the frigate. "What will they say of us in England?" was his next remark.

A week later they were off Hurstpoint without having sighted a ship.

As soon as they had the first glimpse of land, Jack ordered the other two vessels to lie to and ran into Hurstpoint to bring out the little *Dolphin.* He dropped Weetman in a boat to send him out the cutter and gave him a letter for his father, telling him to come to Portsmouth to meet him.

Next day they were in the Solent, but as soon as they came under the lee of the Isle of Wight Jack stopped the vessel and put a hundred of the French sailors, to whom he had promised liberty, on board the little *Dolphin,* and told Knight, her skipper, to drop them in Boulogne. Everyone of the Frenchmen, Jack thought, had earned his freedom. But he was soon to discover that the English authorities didn't agree with him.

The arrival of the ships in Portsmouth caused a certain stir. About four o'clock Jack went on shore to report himself. To his astonishment he was told that the admiral could not see him then, but would see him next morning if he would come at about eight. Jack had a very good mind to take his prize up the Thames and not call upon the admiral at all. It would probably have been better for his future prospects in the navy if he had followed this first impulse.

When he called next morning he found himself treated rather like an upstart than a victor. The admiral took it for granted that the victory was a mere piece of luck. He listened half contemptuously to Jack's answers to his questions, and then put the whole success down to the fact that the foremast of the French frigate had been shot away.

"The lucky shot," he kept repeating, "the lucky shot—the hazard of war," till Jack wondered how anything so brainless could ever have come to command. He never even asked about the size of Jack's cannon, and when Jack told him his guns were heavier than the frigate's he pursed out his lips as if that mattered nothing or as if Jack were bragging. In fact, Jack had a good lesson in

what professional pride could do to obscure common sense.

With unfeigned delight the admiral pounced upon Jack's admission that he had given a hundred French sailors their liberty.

"What!" he cried, "no king's officer would take upon himself such an unwarrantable liberty. I'll have to report it to the Admiralty. Never heard of such a thing in my life. You'll be lucky if you get off without seeing the inside of a prison. That's what comes of giving commissions to merchant seamen."

Jack stared at him, striving to keep calm.

"How was I to bring nearly three hundred men back as prisoners when I could not put even a hundred to guard them?"

"Disarm 'em and clap 'em under hatches," the admiral shouted.

"But who would have navigated the frigate?" asked Jack. "It was still blowing hard."

"That's your business," said the admiral. "You might have scuttled her if you could not bring her into port."

"I am allowed then to drown my prisoners," said Jack, "but not to set them free?"

"That's enough," said the admiral. "You

don't know your duty, Sir. How you ever got a commission I'll be hung if I can imagine."

But fortunately the Port Admiral only represented the ordinary professional opinion. The captain of one of the king's ships in the harbour came on board the *Wasp* in the afternoon and congratulated Jack in the handsomest manner, declared he had never believed such a victory possible, asked him to dinner and when Jack told him what the Port Admiral had said, he burst out laughing and told him not to mind; that the old fellow was a better judge of port wine and rum than seamanship.

"He is the nephew," he said, "of a former Lord of the Admiralty and knows a good deal about good living and very little about the sea."

Jack soon received further proof that his triumph was not to pass unappreciated. Next day he received a letter from Fox enclosing a Captain's commission.

> The Admiralty send you this: it's the least they could do; you have deserved well of your country. I am delited.
>
> C. J. Fox.

Jack noticed that the great man had spelt "delited."

As soon as he had time to think he racked his brain to understand why his father had not come to Portsmouth to meet him.

The next day he got the admiral's permission to return to Hurstpoint in the *Wasp*.

CHAPTER VII

HE ran into Hurstpoint harbour about nine o'clock the next night. In spite of the natural pride in his own achievement, for some reason or other Jack felt terribly depressed. Why hadn't his father met him at Portsmouth? He knew that the old man would delight in selling the frigate. Before they even reached the harbour the mystery was solved. Weetman came off in the *Mary's* boat and told him that his father was very ill, not expected to live.

Jack left his vessel to Gosport, threw himself into the gig and hurried to the Robin Hood. He met Nancy in the very door, who told him between her sobs that his father was unconscious, very weak, and Emily was in the parlour. He went in to see his sister at once. She chilled him to the heart by assuming that the end was at hand.

"I'm glad you're in time," she said.

Jack kissed her and went upstairs at once. Although he entered quietly the old man heard, and one might have thought he had been waiting

for his son, for a faint smile flickered over his tanned face and he opened his eyes and held out his hand as Jack hurried to the bedside.

"How are you, dad; how do you feel?"

"I don't feel much," said the old man in a slow, faint voice, "except that I'm tired. What have you done, lad? Did they tell me you'd taken a frigate—a forty-gun ship?"

Jack nodded.

"Well done," cried the old man.

"They've made me a captain in the navy," said Jack.

"H'm," grumbled the old man, "Bonaparte would have made you an admiral. But you've done well, very well, and now you'll have The Court. I wish I could live to see you there. . . . But I've had a good time of it, Jack, and now I'm going. I want to sleep," he said, "sleep all the time. . . .

"Love's all right for youth, but it plays an old man out. Nancy's a good piece; she's been very kind to me, Jack, and I know you'll be kind to her." . . .

For a while he lay still with closed eyes till Jack, looking down on him and seeing him so grey and the nose so thin and waxen-white, feared

that he had passed. But as he leaned to listen if he breathed, the old man woke again.

"I'm dying," he whispered. "I feel it, but I wouldn't have that boy Carrol to pray at me. He's a squit; a jellyfish, pretty to look at but no backbone. I offended your sister by telling her I didn't want him. . . .

"I've come to the end," he went on again, after a pause to get strength. "I don't fear anything and I don't hope much. This life is all we get and I have had a very good time on the whole. I wouldn't mind having it all over again, you know," he added with a flash of the old spirit, "but the anchor's running out." . . . Each sentence seemed to exhaust him more.

"Wiggin's got the nest-egg, Jack," he whispered, "for your little girl," then he chuckled: "Crosby——" but he could hardly continue: "Crosby'll have a warm berth." . . . He winked maliciously. Jack's breath was catching in his throat.

A little while later he opened his eyes again and Jack saw distress in the face, dread in the staring eyes.

"I'm going," the old man gasped, and as Jack slipped his hand under his shoulders and lifted him up on the pillow:

"Damn it," he groaned in a spasm of pain, and his head fell back with the mouth open.

In a passion of tenderness Jack closed the eyes and mouth and kissed the sharp features. . . .

Later Nancy came into the room sobbing heavily and then Emily also, and they began putting the place to rights.

Jack made his way out into the night with an awful sense of loneliness and solitude upon him. At first in his distress he thought of going to see Carrol, but he couldn't, he simply couldn't face Carrol's perfect complacent trust. He could have done with Riding perhaps, but he preferred to be alone. . . .

The next days passed in vague unreal happenings: then the funeral and he saw his father buried by his mother in the little churchyard on the southern slope that caught the sun.

They all met together in the parlour and heard the lawyer read the will. As soon as it was over Nancy came to Jack and assured him that though the Inn had been left to her, he would always be welcome there as master, and if he would keep his old room she'd be very glad.

Jack looked at her; perhaps some of it was true.

An hour later he took his sister back to The

Grange. But when Carrol tried to keep him to dinner and engage him in talk, Jack shrank from him; every touch hurt, he was better alone.

He found it almost impossible to live. His father gone; life was empty to him. The old man had been another self; his praise a reward; his energy, courage and resource a perpetual encouragement; his caution, his suspiciousness, his religious bargainings, his lewdness even—everything in him was delightful to Jack; his father had been a great man, he felt; if his field in life had been higher; he would have done great things. The indomitable energy in him, the splendid courage were irresistible. Jack suffered beyond words; he had loved his father; the bereavement was dreadful. . . .

He lived on board the brigantine, hid himself away from those who had any right to come near him; he avoided any intrusion on his lonely misery. It seemed as if something in him were broken; as if it were impossible for him to take up again the burden of life. He didn't even care to shave or to attend to his dress. He wandered about the deck like a ghost, and would sit for hours in the cabin buried in blank apathy.

One day Riding came into the cabin to see him and took in the situation at a glance.

"I've come to see you," he said briskly, "and to annoy you I'm afraid. The Admiralty has censured you for setting free the French sailors."

Jack looked at him; he didn't even know what he was talking about, much less care for any censure.

"And they have made an offer of thirty thousand pounds for the French frigate?"

To get rid of him Jack said: "All right, let them have it." What did he care?

"I refused it," Riding went on, "in your name, said you would fit her out again for sea and read your new commission on board."

Jack shook his head. In vain Riding pleaded with him. He would not hear of it, but grew impatient and shut himself up again in his cabin.

That night Riding went up to The Grange and told Emily what he had seen.

"If he isn't roused in some way or other," he said, "he'll get worse and worse. Gosport tells me he doesn't eat; he's incredibly haggard and thin. You see," he went on, "he's very affectionate; he doesn't seem to want to live. What can be done?"

His earnestness, his conviction alarmed Emily and she called her husband in and the three discussed it.

Suddenly it came to Emily that the one person who might help them was Margaret Barron. She wrote to her at length that same evening and told her of Jack's state.

As soon as she got the letter Margaret came down to The Court and saw Emily, who proposed that Riding should inveigle Jack on shore by telling him that his signature was absolutely needed. But Margaret would not hear of the trick; she would go on board at once and see Jack.

As she entered the cabin Jack looked at her and then looked down again.

After a pause she came near him:

"Won't you speak to me?" she asked.

"What's the good?" he said, "I'm finished."

But as he spoke thoughts began to stir in him again and he woke to misery. In the same way a man whose hand has been frostbitten feels nothing in it till he attempts to move it or bring it to life again and then as the blood begins to stir in the veins the pain of renewed life becomes intolerable. So all the pain of living, all the bitterness of death and love irreparable swept over Jack and found words:

"What's the good of it all?" he repeated. "We struggle and struggle and accomplish nothing: it's like swimming against a current: we

think we're forging ahead and making progress; in reality our utmost efforts don't advance us an inch.

"The fools get honour and place, the selfish win power they can only misuse; our loves and affections all recoil on us in loss and misery; 'twould be better not to live. . . .

"I've lost heart and hope: and can only suffer."

Margaret looked at him.

"You only think of yourself then," she began; but broke off quickly; "that doesn't matter. The strong and brave, Jack, find hope in their own hearts to give to others, the weak whine and complain. I always thought you were among the strong. . . ."

The heat came into Jack's cheeks, the remedy was bitter but it worked; he felt that his self-abandonment was criminally weak: he was not really defeated and desperate; but heart-sick and lonely. He got up slowly and went over to her:

"It was good of you to come," he said and took her hands, and at the touch of them, the band about his heart was loosened and tears burned in his eyes:

"It's good to see you," he repeated, and as he kissed her hands he became conscious that he

hadn't shaved for weeks, and was in rough sea togs; but Margaret seemed to take no notice of his appearance.

"Why have you hidden yourself away?" she cried. "All London's talking of you; just to know you is an honour; we're all proud of you!"

He found little to say. He was embarrassed, ashamed of himself, but the cloud had lifted. He was a man again. He begged her to meet him the next day and when she consented he took her on deck and asked Riding to see her to The Grange.

Within an hour he had shaved himself and dressed carefully and had Gosport and Riding to dinner in the cabin of the brigantine; he heard all Riding's news, approved of everything—even of the plan to fit out the frigate for a cruise under the Union Jack.

Resolutely now he turned away from the melancholy brooding; hope had come back to him, hope and desire. He slept well, dressed carefully, and went up in a hurry to The Grange.

The autumn day had a brisk exhilaration in it. Jack drew in long breaths of the cold sweet air; the tang of the salt sea-breeze did him good, lifted his spirits.

When Margaret came in, his whole being

thrilled to the meeting. He took in now with delight that she was more beautiful than ever, his deep-breasted love. Immediately after dinner he insisted on taking her home to The Court.

Their road led past the spot where he had stopped her that wet night long ago.

"Can you forgive me?" he said, pausing at the same spot.

She looked at him with inscrutable eyes, smiling.

"I kissed you again and again against your will," he said: "I was half mad. Have you forgiven me?"

She looked at him. "Are you sure?" she asked.

He didn't catch her meaning. "What?" he said.

"You silly man," she said, and when his look questioned her she added:

"I have nothing to forgive, Jack."

Slowly he took her in his arms and kissed her on the lips, kissed her on the eyes and hair, putting her arms round his neck, taking possession of her, wholly——

A little later she drew herself from his embrace all flushed.

"You love me?" he asked.

"Surely," she replied, her eyes meeting his.

They walked on a little way in silence, then he began regretfully:

"What a pity it is that with us men the sense so often runs away with the spirit, and we mistake the heat of blood for love. Women like you are so much truer than we are," he added, "you have nothing to regret."

"Don't be too sure," she said. "I wonder if I confessed to you, what you would think?"

"Come," he said, drawing her to him with a divine tender joy at the thought of having something to forgive. "What have you done, sweetheart?"

"When you took me and kissed me that night," she said, "so roughly, I was glad of it; my heart leaped in me for joy. Then I thought you must have felt my quick delight, and I had no right to feel, no right to let myself go; I was a little frightened of myself. But underneath I was all jubilant, glad. . . .

"When you said to me that I'd forgive you before you'd forgive yourself, I could have laughed aloud.

"It seemed so funny to hear you talk of forgiveness; as if I had anything to forgive. But it showed you hadn't noticed my joy and I was proud of myself again.

"I went quickly away because I had to, for you won my very heart by kneeling to me, and if I had stayed a moment longer I'd have told you I cared for nothing in the world but you, nothing, nothing; not for father or mother or position or anything in the wide world, but only you, just you," and she kissed him with hot lips.

A moment later she said, knitting her brows: "Curious: my love makes me humble; I wish I were lovely for your sake."

"Hush, hush," he said, taking her head in his hands and kissing her on the lips again. "Hush, dear! You make me ashamed. To win you is more than I dared to hope."

She put her arms round him and kissed him again passionately. "I'm glad," she said, "I want nothing better than life with you."

THE END

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